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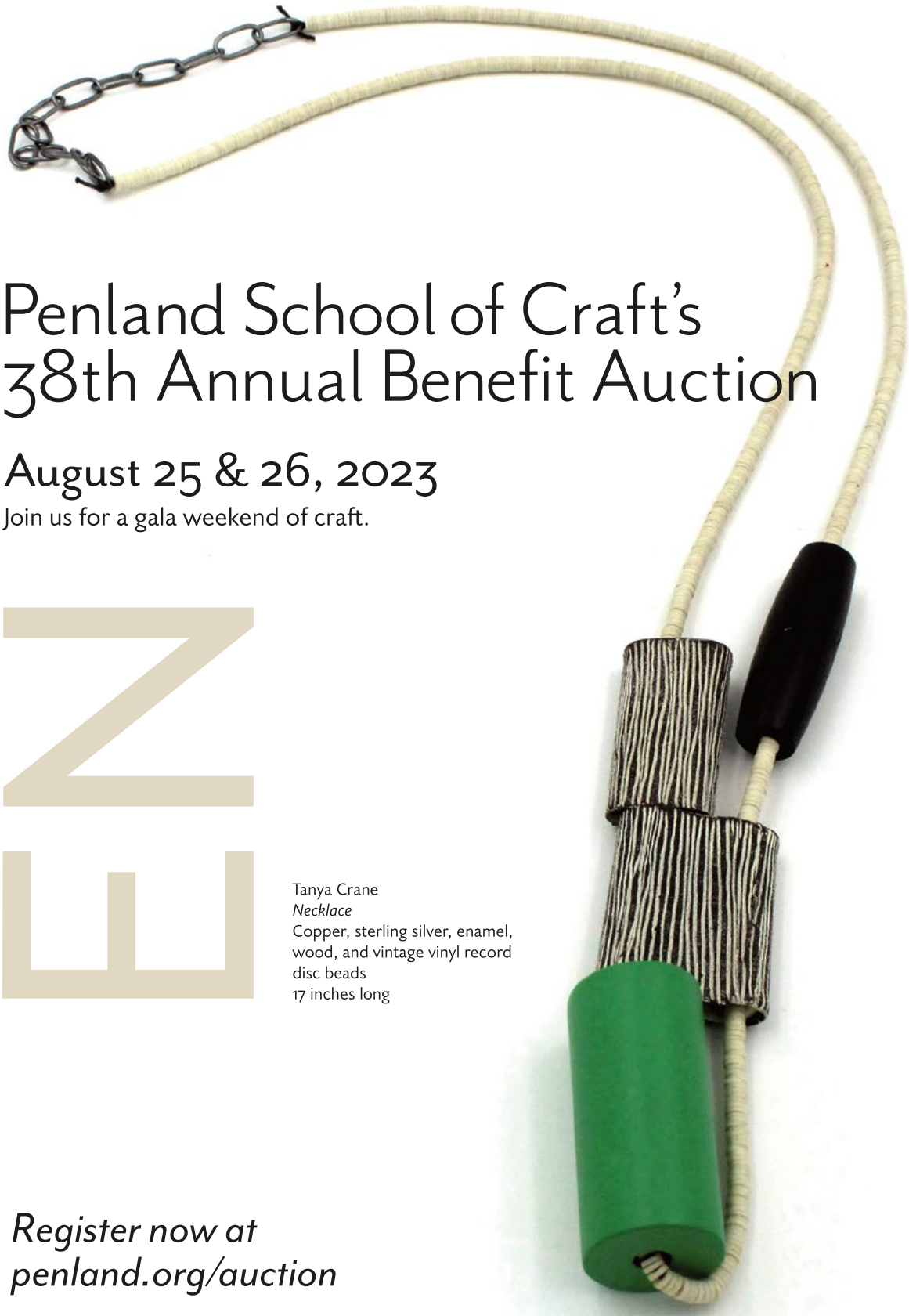

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Elizabeth Shaw
See page 51.

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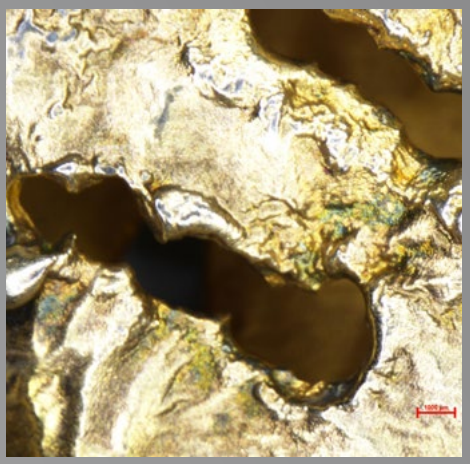

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ON THE COVER Michaela Pegum: *All is intimate I*, 2021. See page 28.

In an age where technology has woven itself seamlessly into the fabric of our lives, the rise of AI programs like ChatGPT and DALL-E marks a turning point in the evolution of human creativity. With each passing day, these digital artisans become more adept at imitating our thoughts and manifesting them in ways we never thought possible.

Reader, I have a confession. Those opening lines were written by ChatGPT. They are an excerpt of a text I generated using the following prompt: "Write a one-paragraph introduction to a foreword for *Metalsmith* magazine that ponders the growing ubiquity of AI programs like ChatGPT and DALL-E." When I first read the output, I experienced a sort of twofold annoyance: first at the cheery, uncritical optimism of the statements and second at the words "digital artisans," which obscure the fact that these emerging technologies use a cache of human-made artworks, images, and texts as the basis for their creations. There isn't space enough on this page to describe how creepy and worrisome I find all of this.

That said—even in a publication that values outside-the-box ideas and approaches—it feels potentially controversial to spare print space exploring these programs. Nonetheless, in "Findings" Liz Steiner gives readers an overview of some ways artists are engaging with AI-generated imagery. Curious about the potential of these programs, the editorial team share in "Crit Group" a selection of our attempts to determine if or how artists in our field might use ChatGPT as a tool. We've tried to keep it light, but throughout the process we were confronted with serious questions about ways that AI threatens the already significantly devalued labor of artists and writers.

The rest of the issue stands in contrast. A poem by Maya Kini revels in mortality and the materiality of metal. Ann Glasscock's profile on silversmith Preston Jones celebrates the artist's commitment to handwork. In "LOOK," artists shine light through the interstices of maker and practice. And "Out/Loud: Queer Play" and the latest installment of "Jewelry Thinking" offer fun new forms while also posing questions about material hierarchies and functionality. The conversation Rebekah Frank begins with Carson Terry's confounding cutlery is continued in matt lambert's feature on cruising as a relational making practice.

Prompted by LaMar R. Gayles Jr.'s study of a pendant by jewelry artist Bob Jefferson—about whom very little information is known and only a handful of works are identified—I found myself ruminating on the contrast between our material realities and the shiny newness of AI's presumed potential for bettering our lives. While others marvel at the possibilities these emerging technologies hold, I care more about addressing the long-standing structural inequities by which artists are lost to history and pushed to the margins. Regardless of what is to come, let's all agree to continue celebrating and honoring the field's many varieties of intellectual and artistic labor. ***—Adriane Dalton, Editor***

The mission of *Metalsmith* is to explore, analyze, promote, and document excellence and innovation in the field of jewelry and metalsmithing. In achieving this goal, SNAG will produce and oversee the direction and content of a publication that will serve as a significant resource for the metalsmithing field. The editorial content of *Metalsmith* will emphasize contemporary activities, makers, and ideas and incorporate supportive content, relevant critical issues, and the exchange of viewpoints.

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Contributors

Jackie Andrews is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and arts administrator based in rural Maryland. They currently work as a grant writer and development professional for several artists and arts nonprofits across the United States. (@jackiegemcreative)

Rebekah Frank is a studio artist and independent writer who enjoys traveling the world in search of interesting experiences to fuel both her art and writing practices. (rebekahfrank.com)

LaMar R. Gayles Jr. is an archaeologist, independent curator, material culture scholar, and technical art historian. He is currently enrolled in the PhD program in Art Conservation and Preservation Studies at the University of Delaware. He has researched and curated exhibitions on Black American material culture and its historical progressions from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first century. One of his recent exhibitions was *Divine Legacies in Black Jewelry* at the National Museum of Ornamental Metals.

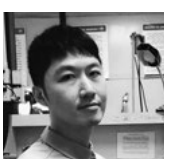
Ann Glasscock, a decorative arts and silver specialist, is the associate curator at the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati. In 2019, Glasscock received a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she completed her dissertation "Hudson Roysher: Silversmith, Designer, Craftsman," which explores Roysher's participation in the revival of ecclesiastical silver in postwar America.

Maya Kini is a visual artist, poet, and mother of two who lives in San Francisco. Her poems have appeared in *Bellevue Literary Review, River Heron Review, Wildfire Magazine,* and *Crucible*. Her favorite material is gold for its capacity to stretch, to tell stories, and to endure. (mayakini.com)

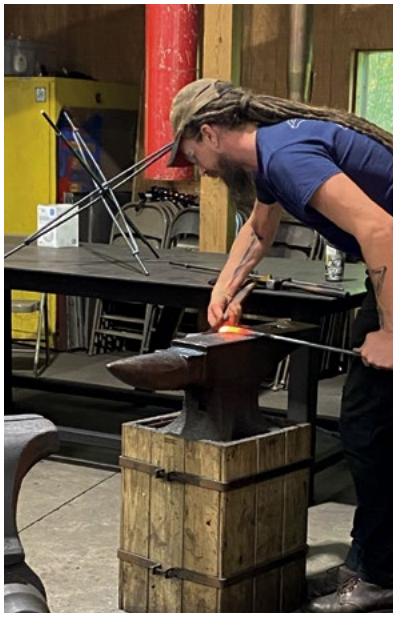
matt lambert is a nonbinary, trans multidisciplinary collaborator and co-conspirator working towards equity, inclusion, and reparation. Their practice is based in polydisciplinamory, entangling object-making, writing, curating, and performing. lambert is currently a PhD candidate in craft at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts & Design in Stockholm, Sweden. They have published, curated, and exhibited internationally, and their work is collected across the globe. (@matt_lambert_studio)

Nikki Nation is a jewelry artist and store owner based in Denver, Colorado. She graduated with her BFA in Jewelry + Metalsmithing from Southern Illinois University and earned an MA in Arts Administration from the University of Denver. She has taught metalsmithing, exhibited at art fairs nationally, and worked for several jewelers and metalsmiths. She currently runs her business and owns a brick-and-mortar store. (@nikki.nation.jewelry)

Liz Steiner is a maker and educator located in Greenville, North Carolina. She can be found in the digital space on Instagram @lrsteiner7 and in person at the MakersSpace of Greenville. She is not a robot.



Siteng Wei is a contemporary jewelry artist, designer, and educator based in China. He obtained his PhD from RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, majoring in gold and silversmithing. He is currently working as teaching and research staff at the Guangzhou College of Commerce. His research and practice involve contemporary jewelry and object art, traditional Cantonese arts and crafts, and cultural creativity in product design.



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IMPACT

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SNAG inspires creativity and innovation by creating resources and opportunities to help professionals at all levels in the field achieve success.

***L-R** / Touchstone's Blaney Lodge / Peter Brasspenninx forging an element for a tension fit sculpture (sample seen in background) / Andrew Thornton casting resin molds / Artists Market / Evening around the firepit / Rachel David demonstrating power-chasing*

SCAN TO VISIT
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May 19-21, 2023

*This intimate gathering was a weekend full of **forging connections** between blacksmithing and metalsmithing.*

Farmington, PA – Sixty miles from Pittsburgh is the idyllic Laurel Highlands region, home to Touchstone Center for Crafts. This relaxed and rustic environment was a natural setting for an inspiring weekend of programs.

The event kicked off Friday evening with dinner from Touchstone's outdoor pizza oven followed by a viewing of the show *#366 Hooks* created by Matt Jenkins. A pop-up exhibition of work by SNAG x Touchstone attendees allowed us to begin the weekend making acquaintances and connecting makers with their objects and interests. Both nights concluded with camaraderie and conversation around Touchstone's iconic firepit.

Erica Moody set the tone for the weekend with her approachable, inspiring and informative Keynote on Saturday morning. Following the presentation, attendees broke out into four groups for a round-robin of demonstrations by Erica, Peter Brasspenninx, Rachel David, and Rachel Kedinger. The afternoon culminated with an Artists Market/Tool Swap—a mix of selling, shopping, trading and sharing amongst the group.

Sunday, three Early Career Artists gave fantastic presentations about their work and unusual journeys: Andrew Thornton, Willow Zietman, and Sachi Nasatir. Then folks headed back to the studios where they could try their hand at resin casting under direction from Andrew or watch Willow forge an owl. Attendees

Pop-Up Attendee Exhibition & #366 Hooks *in Touchstone's Gallery*

Erica Moody demonstrating the process of forging a spoon

Sachi Nasatir's Early Career Artist presentation

Willow Zeitman's Early Career Artist presentation

Rachel Kedinger removing liquid enamel from a dish

Erica Moody's Keynote Presentation

departed after lunch, hearts and minds full of the positive energy felt all weekend.

"It was an amazing time of having a full metal smith crossover and knowledge share," Peter Brasspenninx shared with his followers on Instagram. "Deep conversations were had about our community of craftspeople. How we are a small tight knit group, but we also separate ourselves further into sub-categories that keep us from all banding together to strengthen our craft. My take away was that we need to be better involved as a larger community instead of having factions according to process. We are all working towards the same goals with our work and careers. Trying to get more exposure and educate the public about what we do."

These feelings were echoed and these ideas discussed throughout the weekend as attendees forged connections with each other and our crafts.

Watch these programs *in SNAG's Video Library*

- Erica Moody's Keynote Presentation
- Early Career Artist Presentations
  - Andrew Thornton
  - Willow Zietman
  - Sachi Nasatir

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VOICE & VISION
MAYA KINI

Alluvial Deposits (after Carboplatin chemotherapy)

My friend with size 12 fingers insists on platinum
so I set to work carving wedding ring from wax block
refining the crude hacks of my handsaw
with a file and a multitude of sandpapers.

It weighs barely a gram, this brittle model
but transformed into metal it will become
a heavy ballast, it will right the ship,
at least that is what my friend imagines.

I carve slashes into satiny 600-grit surface
as if it has been mauled by a bear my friend directs me
he is watching a Werner Herzog movie
about caves and signs, man and animal.

He wants the animal present in the ring I craft.
I could hone a bear claw, make a tiny tool
become a Wild Thing scratching at ring's surface
instead, I use precision tungsten burrs to engrave an ursine alphabet.

Maya Kini
Edward, 2006
Purse Contents series
Photograph of ¼ round
22k gold coin with
ornamental bail on chain
Photo by the artist

Maya Kini
Liberty Coin Ring (In Last Light), 2023
1 troy ounce 24k gold liberty coin, defaced with a PUK welder, punched and forged
2½ x 1½ x ¼ in.
Photo by the artist

II

What constitutes treasure is subject to interpretation.
Aguirre, spun round on a river raft, searching
for *El Dorado*. The contents of the treasure chest
are usually gold and gems, perhaps feathers
ink, bone, water.

I've never seen a chest full of silver's dull, heavy relative

But I've tasted it. Platinum flowed through my veins.
I have known it to be a precise poison
that lingers still
as heavy metals do.

When my living is done
when blood and bile leach back into earth
when my seas evaporate
and my fascia lets go
the well-built pyre of my bones
will reach substantial temperatures
capable of drawing platinum out
and you will find that all along
deep in marrow hair follicle
it's been mating with the gold.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY LIZ STEINER

DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF DIGITAL JEWELS?

At the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) conference in 1956, the possibilities of the new technology must have seemed wildly futuristic and far away from reality.[1] Now, in the twenty-first century, programs based on AI are available to the masses with all their possibilities, pitfalls, and controversies. While graphic designers and illustrators are already being impacted by the accessibility of AI, this technology has a wide range of applications in the jewelry industry—from grading diamonds to designing jewelry to elevating "phygital" (blended aspects of the physical and digital) retail experiences. Indeed, the applications are so intriguing that the 2022 NYC Jewelry Week included a panel discussing how "The Future Is Now: AI in the Jewelry Industry."[2]

Whether it's done by a machine or a computer system, Artificial Intelligence simulates human thought processes, which can take different forms. Of relevance to this discussion is one of these forms, the expert system. Two components of this system are a knowledge base (a database of information in a distinct expertise) and an inference engine, the "most fundamental job [of which] is to gather pertinent information from the knowledge base, analyze it, and identify a solution to the user's issue."[3] One program built using this approach is Midjourney, which has a database of imagery. When given a text prompt, the program then creates images from its database tailored to the prompt. Results can vary widely, from images nearly identical to a specific artist's style to spectacular missteps. Also, in the translation from 2D to 3D, AI can fail to account for limits of materiality and construction.

Matthew Smith

When AI programs hit the mainstream, jewelry artist Matthew Smith began experimenting with Midjourney. He made futuristic spaceships and retro-modern houseboats at first—then considered using it to design jewelry. He says, "It was impressive and somewhat disturbing what the software could do, but it was very clear that it represented a major paradigm shift for those of us in creative fields."[4] Smith's aesthetic is rooted in Midcentury modern design, so he prompted the software to "imagine" jewelry in this style just out of curiosity of what the program would produce. He states, "It was clear that the AI had a grasp of the common design themes of the era, but with such general guidance the results were fairly generic, sometimes bizarre, and not really related in any way to the work I make."

From there, Smith uploaded images of his own work for the AI to use as reference. For him, AI software is a design tool, a way of reimagining often-used forms and ideas. "When using AI, the goal is never really to have it design a finished product for me because it doesn't do that very well.... What it is good at is taking a seed of information you give it, jumbling it up, and spitting it back out in a variety of ways. From those results I might pick up on an interesting composition, shape, or

Midjourney, prompted by Matthew Smith
Midjourney AI Image Grid, 2023
Digital rendering

Matthew Smith
Fish Necklace, 2023
Sterling silver, wenge, resin, peridot
2½ x 1⅝ x ¼ in.
Photo by the artist

texture, which can spark an idea that can be applied to my work." (MatthewSmithStudios.com)

Edge of Dreaming

Edge of Dreaming, another creative that uses Midjourney to push the bounds of jewelry design, produces "imaginary jewelry" that is ornate, opulent, and organic—high fantasy meets art nouveau. These fanciful images begin to scratch the surface of what is possible if we leave all constraints of materiality, functionality, and practicality behind. Within the realm of the imaginary, the physical product isn't the end goal. While many Edge of Dreaming pieces do in fact look realistic, and could be produced by the most masterful of carvers, some contain elements that would be difficult to replicate, such as gemstones lit from within, skin-like textures shot through with veins, and components that seem to have grown from living tissue rather than being fabricated from inorganic materials. These images raise questions concerning the importance of the physical object over a digital rendering. When a piece would take the hours and level of skill that many of Edge of Dreaming's images would require, producing a tangible object becomes impractical from a business standpoint. The value of these digital renderings lies not only in their beauty, but in the unmitigated creative freedom they represent. Without the burden of cost, efficiency, time, and materiality, we are free to dream anything. (@edgeofdreaming)

Artificial Intelligems

The collective Artificial Intelligems tackles the application of AI in jewelry design from a philosophical angle. The collective "explores the artistic potential, as well as the possible risks, of machine learning within contemporary jewelry." They state that by "'working with' self-learning algorithms, new types and acts of adornment emerge within the phygital realm." Their website is meant to function as an archive, focusing on writing and research rather than finished, wearable works.

Their current project is *Ornamisms*, where individuals are invited to submit images of jewelry on the body. The images are then fed into AI software, and the resulting images are meant to be an exploration of

"machine learning as cocreator in jewelry practice."[5] Using AI technologies in this way leads to new forms or presentations of adornment and make space for "more than human" craft methods. Artificial Intelligems states, "These experiments, in which we try to connect with hundreds of makers and their works, are meant to critically question human-centred design, materiality, value, or authorship."

◆◆◆

Indeed, ideas of authorship are the biggest controversy plaguing the use of AI in the creative industry. According to the US Copyright Office (USCO), works by AI don't fall under precedents of current copyright law since they "are not products of human authorship." USCO feels that users have very little control over the end product of an AI tool like Midjourney, because results are heavily influenced by the training data provided to the program—as opposed to being influenced by choices made by the program user.[6]

Even murkier are the copyright issues surrounding *where* that training data comes from. The data used in machine learning for these programs is created by humans, often with copyright protections, and often without the human creators' knowledge or consent. For example, the data set in the program Stable Diffusion is a compilation of images from all over the internet, a sampling of everything from Getty Images and Shutterstock to personal blogs and Deviant Art accounts. While some large tech companies, start-ups, and AI researchers believe that this "data" falls under the US fair use doctrine, "which aims to encourage the use of copyright-protected work to promote freedom of expression," many artists don't see this as fair use.

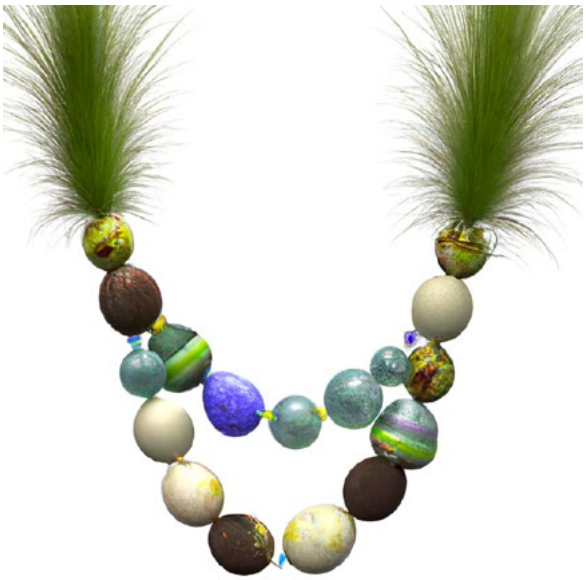
DALL-E, prompted by Liz Steiner
A three-strand necklace made of lichen, moss, and pearls (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

Plus, since data sets can be comprised of a single artist's work, they could produce an AI product that looks like a convincing copy or new work by that artist. Again, this can happen without the knowledge or permission of the original artist.[7]

While lawyers and lawmakers struggle to keep up, the Artificial Intelligems collective has opted for a transparent approach; they've consulted copyright lawyers and devoted an entire section of their website to answering how the collective is addressing these issues. For example, artists are asked to *willingly* submit images; no images are mindlessly mined from the internet. Also, all submitted photos are published on the website, with hyperlinks to the designers' websites and social media. Artificial Intelligems states, "These kinds of transformative technologies indeed provide both opportunities as well as challenges and risks, and it is essential to always consider different sides and perspectives. Today, issues concerning AI and art, copyright, ownership of AI-generated content ... ignite some heated and urgent debates. And rightly so. We try to stay informed as best we can about these developments."[8]

Clearly, the functionality of AI has opened up a new world—of prospects and potential legal hazards—to jewelers and other creatives. Whether used as idea generation, a final product, or a new way to create adornment, AI is expanding the field in ways never dreamed of until now.

1 "A Brief History of Artificial Intelligence," https://www.simplilearn.com/tutorials/artificial-intelligence-tutorial. **2** https://nycjewelryweek.com/events/scheduled/2022-11-19/the-future-is-now-a-i-in-the-jewelry-industry, https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=phygital. **3** Simplilearn, "What Are Expert Systems In AI? Complete Guide," last updated February 13, 2023, https://www.simplilearn.com/tutorials/artificial-intelligence-tutorial/what-are-expert-systems-in-ai. **4** Matthew Smith, personal interview with the author, March 2023. **5** "About Artificial Intelligems," last edited January 31, 2023, https://artificialintelligems.com; https://artificialintelligems.com/call-ornamisms. **6** Jamie Lang, "U.S. Copyright Office Says AI-Generated Images Do Not Qualify for Copyright Protection," Cartoon Brew, February 28, 2023, https://www.cartoonbrew.com/law/midjourney-ai-images-us-copyright-office-226437.html. **7** James Vincent, "The Scary Truth about AI Copyright Is Nobody Knows What Will Happen Next," The Verge, November 15, 2022, https://www.theverge.com/23444685/generative-ai-copyright-infringement-legal-fair-use-training-data. **8** "A.I. and art?!" last edited January 17, 2023, https://artificialintelligems.com/a-i-and-art.



Top:
DALL-E, prompted by Liz Steiner
A three-strand necklace made of songbird eggs, grass, and feathers (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

Below:
DALL-E, prompted by Liz Steiner
A three-strand necklace made of lichen, moss, and pearls (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

OUT/LOUD: QUEER PLAY

BY JACKIE ANDREWS

Out/Loud investigates shared visual language in the queer community through the lens of adornment. The artists in this series are multidisciplinary and varied, exploring queerness, gender, and identity and interpreting adornment broadly through surface embellishments, color palettes, and engaging the body through installations, sculpture, and wearable objects and costuming. Each installment will explore a singular aspect or theme of queer aesthetics. The resulting works are celebratory, exuberant, defiant, and inquisitive—they pose questions about the politics of bodies and how we express ourselves; they disregard rules and examine the privilege, complexity, and danger that comes with visibility; and they imagine queer futures.

IN PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS OF OUT/LOUD, we've investigated queer aesthetics in a variety of forms—often seemingly contradicting one another: flamboyant maximalism that inspires defiant camouflage; celebration of identity that also reckons with personal and communal grief; reflections that invite reinvention and reclamation; mythology and folklore that allow us to imagine new futures. The topic of queer joy is no different. In a world that is so often threatening to the LGBTQIA+ community, expressions of queer joy can feel like a frivolous luxury. But in reality, such expressions are vital sustenance: they provide momentary respite, while also energizing us. They affirm our vibrant inner worlds so that we might make our surrounding world into one where we thrive and grow rather than struggle to survive.

Queer joy and play often hinges on the various ways we heal, reconnect with, and reclaim our inner child. It is a particularly common experience for people in the LGBTQIA+ community to experience some kind of "second adolescence" over the course of their coming-out process, for any number of reasons. Examples include: processing internalized homophobia experienced in youth, experimentation with self-expression and/or gender presentation that was otherwise discouraged by societal norms, creation of chosen family and new traditions, or even a second puberty precipitated by gender-affirming hormone treatments. Regardless of cause, the reclamation of the inner child is considered a queer rite of passage—one that is often inherently fun, playful, and joy-filled. The roster of artists' practices and works that connect with the ideas of queer joy, imagining, and playfulness is a lengthy one; and while this installment is by no means comprehensive, the following artists are standouts. Metalsmith and jeweler Newell Catania, fiber artist and jeweler Levaille Eitzman, and metalsmith,

jeweler, and object-maker Everett Hoffman offer three distinct approaches to making that exemplify notions of queer joy and playfulness in the studio.

Newell Catania (they/she) brings "statement jewelry" to the next level, making oversized adornments covered in carefully curated, cleverly set toys and found materials. Catania's work calls out for attention—and practically begs to be tinkered with. For them, queerness comes through in their unconventional—and often childlike—approach to materiality. Catania describes their material philosophy in an interview with *Queer Metalsmiths* in conjunction with their 2022 NYC Jewelry Week exhibition *[queerphoria]:* "I think that queerness showed through in my art before I even knew to call it that. Initially I worked a lot with kids' craft supplies, processing the traumas of growing up in the environment that I did.... Recently I've recognized that I'm much more interested in found objects with some grit.... I want to go to the dump and find materials that had a whole life before I came into the picture. There's something queer in that."[1]

Catania graduated in 2023 from the Tyler Metals CAD-CAM program, and their thesis exhibition, *Something Clever*, is aptly named. A standout piece in the collection, *I Spy Necklace,* could be a game all on its own. Catania's editorial-style photograph of the work—the background filled with toys, game pieces, candy bags, and other domestic clutter—sells the concept while also offering a slight nod to the all-too-familiar clutter of an eccentric artist's studio.

Catania's work is intentionally whimsical, contending with nostalgia, child-like wonder, and joy as a balm for "the frequently painful monotony of adult life."[2] These inspirations are translated in a variety of ways, from witty fine-metal replicas of quintessential childhood playthings to assemblage-style adornments made from preloved toys, trinkets, and the detritus of defunct objects. In *Girl's Princess Bling Flip Phone Lip Gloss Set for Girls*, a skillful bronze-and-silver recreation of a flip phone tween makeup palette practically transports viewers back to their childhood bedrooms. (Or, in my case, the contents of the Claire's accessories store I frequented immediately came to mind.) Catania says of the work: "The marriage of kitsch and fine metals creates a realm of opulent absurdity, offering an escape from the harsh realities of adulthood, if only for a moment."[3] Catania goes on to describe their studio process and work as a way of honoring their (and also the viewer's) inner child, "serving as a love letter to their abandoned interests."[4]

Levaille Eitzman (they/them), also known as Citrus Witch, shares Catania's interest in celebrating the inner child. With a background in painting and textiles, Eitzman comes to jewelry-making by way of DIY handcraft. A self-described "trans, neurodivergent, queer, orange, cowboy clown," Eitzman makes colorful, joy-filled jewelry "for the bold, the flamboyant, the anxious, the queer, the autistic, the misfit, or all of the above."[5] Made from upcycled and thrifted toys, trinkets, beads, and unassuming hardware, each piece is one-of-a-kind, color-filled, and a touch chaotic. Unsurprisingly, Eitzman's sense of humor is present in the work; each work's title is an added spark, and puns and wordplay abound: examples include *Comic Sans Necklace*, *TRANS PHATS Necklace,* and even *Gender Reveal Party for a Trans Adult Necklace* (my personal favorite).

The Citrus Witch Craft wares serve a variety of lighthearted functions, from wearable collections and memory keepers to fidget toys and sensory aids for people with all types of neurodivergence. "Each is a love letter to the little kids who collected dime-piece toys and special rocks in little trinket boxes,... and reclaiming that sense of wonder and treasure into one-of-a-kind, wearable fidget toys."[6] Whether viewed or worn, Citrus Witch Craft creations seem empowered to brighten any day.[7]

Opposite:
Newell Catania
I Spy Necklace, 2022
Gold-plated brass, brass, various found objects
12 x 18 in.
Photo by the artist

Left:
Newell Catania
Girl's Princess Bling Flip Phone Lip Gloss Set for Girls, 2022
Brass, sterling silver, cubic zirconia, Vaseline, mica powder, apple flavor oil
2 x 1½ in.
Photo by the artist

Levaille Eitzman
Gender Reveal Party for a Trans Adult, 2023
Found plastic and glass beads, enamel-coated jump rings and lobster claw, fishing line, Super Glue, eyelet screws, vintage toy monkey head, vintage "BOY" blocks button, plastic toy Barbie teddy bear, vintage Super Ball, dollhouse miniature Jack-in-the-box, party favor mini googly eyes finger puppet, fidget puzzle keychain, vintage wooden Raggedy Ann scrapbooking decoration
9 x 9 in.
Photo by the artist

Everett Hoffman's recent works are playfully illuminating in an entirely different way. In his night light series, Hoffman (he/him) takes meticulous stone setting beyond adornment to dazzling new heights—and scales. Hoffman plays with his materials in a refined way, striking a balance somewhere between minimalist simplicity and maximalist intricacy. In both Hoffman's emoticon night lights and his jewelry, the delicacy of his pierced designs and the seemingly perfect geometry of his metal forms are deceptively simple, a clear testament to his handcraft. In his artist statement, Hoffman describes his multidisciplinary practice as "reimagin[ing] the function of ornamentation and its relationship to the body." This rings true, as his luminary sculptures are just as enticing to viewers and engaging of the body as his signature brooches, like *Pansy Eyes*.[8] A well-known trope in the jewelry field is the sense of reverence for a clever and tidy brooch back or fastener, and Hoffman delivers in spades; his settings are mesmerizing on both sides, and the contrast of each lamp when illuminated offers an extra dose of stunning drama.

The clever coolness of Hoffman's emoticon-inspired works extends to his witty titling—including *sad you're leaving, wait what!?,* and *mmmm, idk*—in which he perfectly captures the levity of emoji-filled text conversations while also defying the immediacy and superficiality of their role as quick reactions. But while far from superficial, Hoffman's night lights are ironically all about surface: treatments are wide-ranging, each equally luscious, including lightly textured bronze; sleek, highly polished stainless steel;

Above:
Everett Hoffman
mmmm, idk, 2021
Bronze, vintage rhinestones, urethane pinstriping paint, light fittings
6 x 6 x 2 in.
Photos: Loam Marketing
Night Lights are represented by Sienna Patti Gallery and Hodges Taylor Gallery

Opposite:
Everett Hoffman
Pansy Eyes, 2019
Vintage rhinestones, anodized titanium, silver, stainless steel
3½ x 3½ x ½ in.
Photo by the artist

and high-gloss powdercoat in juicy, candy-colored palettes and gradients. The visual interest and illustrative quality of Hoffman's work is amplified with the addition of decadent stone settings, often combinations of precious or semi-precious stones and vintage pressed-glass rhinestones and cabochons.

Beyond the night light series, Hoffman is no stranger to playfully queer material use—in adornment objects for both bodies and inanimate surfaces. Across his portfolio, Hoffman's varied bodies of work have utilized a host of unconventional materials: jockstraps made from baseballs or needlepoint and faux pearls, belt buckles made from cast iron skillets, even sculptural necklaces made from urinal cakes. While both Hoffman's practice and the materials on his bench evolve, conceptual questioning seems ever-present: Hoffman approaches his materials "with the eye of a jeweler, highlighting and exploiting the subtle, and often invisible, links between material histories and their connection to identity."[9]

Newell Catania, Levaille Eitzman, and Everett Hoffman show us that queer joy and play in the studio can take a variety of forms. These artists make use of a range of materials to create works that are visually compelling, well-crafted, and meaningful. Queer play encourages us to remain open to experimentation and imaginative new directions—in our studios and beyond. In the words of Newell Catania: "There is hope in materiality; there are endless possibilities at our fingertips, just as there are endless queer futurities."[10]

1 Newell Catania, *[queerphoria],* Queer Metalsmiths, https://www.queermetalsmiths.com/queerphoria-newell-catania. **2** Newell Catania, *Gone Too Soon,* We Are SNAG, https://snagmetalsmith.org/we_are_snag/gone-too-soon. **3** Ibid. **4** Ibid. **5** Citrus Witch, Instagram post, slide 7/8, April 16, 2023, https://www.instagram.com/p/CrGdOcasVIU. **6** Ibid. **7** http://www.citruswitchcraft.com. **8** https://www.everetthoffman.net/new-gallery. **9** Ibid. **10** Newell Catania, *[queerphoria],* Queer Metalsmiths, https://www.queermetalsmiths.com/queerphoria-newell-catania.

YOU ASKED, THEY ANSWERED
NIKKI NATION

Nikki Nation

Photo: Molly Stevenson

ASK ME ANYTHING

Nikki Nation is the owner of Aurum, a brick-and-mortar jewelry business in Denver, Colorado.

What advice would you give to a jeweler/designer who wants to break into selling their work to retailers on a wholesale basis? What is a good first step to take when starting out on this path?

A good first step before starting out in wholesale is creating a cohesive body of work that has your voice and can be easily reproduced. That is key. Also, having an idea of your target audience helps as well, so you know what types of retailers your line would be a good fit for. From there you can either pitch your line to selected retailers or figure out what trade shows would be good to try. It definitely takes time and a lot of trial and error to figure out what works and what doesn't work. I jumped right into wholesale when I first started my business and, looking back, I feel like I should have waited a bit longer before spending the money. I could have developed my line more so I had a larger variety of styles and price points.

How did you raise the capital to upgrade from silver jewelry to gold jewelry? How long did it take you? If you had to do it again, what would you do differently?

I didn't raise capital or save up a chunk of money to start. Instead I slowly started to test out gold by working with gold fill and from there really adding a heavy offering of vermeil. The gold-colored work started to sell way better than my oxidized silver. From there I started adding hints of solid gold to my pieces and would test them out at wholesale shows and art fairs. The response went well, and I kept slowly adding more to my work. I know this is strange timing, but once the pandemic hit, I really just went for it and created a full collection with gold accents. The pandemic allowed me to finally slow down and have the time to design new work. The one thing I had to do was scale down the size of my pieces so they weren't crazy expensive. I was used to working on a larger scale, and that wasn't going to work using gold. Transitioning into gold took maybe two to three years, since I wasn't using working capital other than my own funds.

If I had to do it again I don't know that I would do anything differently. Slowly using additional funds ended up being what worked for me. Figuring out what works best for your budget and your goals is key. If using capital in the form of a loan will allow you to move in a direction where you'd like to take your business, then I say go for it! As long as it works with your business plan and is financially viable.

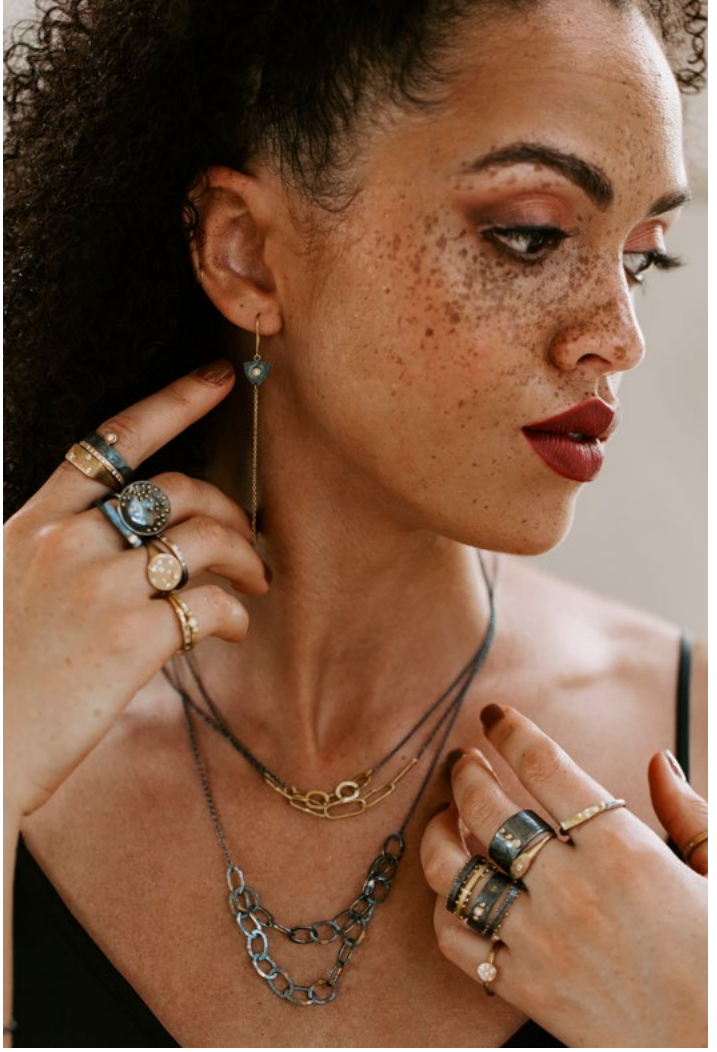
Right:
Scattered Dot Solitaire Ring, 2022
14k yellow gold, white diamonds, 0.8 ct diamond
1½ x 1½ in.
Photo: Molly Slough

Opposite, top:
Image from Nikki Nation's 2022 lookbook
Photo: Jordan Quinn

Opposite, below:
Sol Diamond Necklace, 2022
14k yellow gold, white diamonds
17 x 13 mm
Photo: Molly Slough

Did your Arts Administration degree influence your business model? Does it shape what you do?

My MA degree from the University of Denver didn't shape my business model, but it did influence how I think about certain aspects of running a business. It gave me the knowledge and understanding of many components that go into running a business that I didn't know after my undergraduate studies. Marketing, event planning, financial analysis, and general entrepreneurship were all topics I studied and have directly helped with my business. At the time I didn't want to start or run



a business, but I did use all of my class projects for a potential business in case I changed my mind.

How much money should I save up before starting my business? Someone told me to expect to spend $25,000 on my business every year. Where did you get the capital to start your business in the first place?

To be honest I'm not sure about the exact amount to save up since everyone's business goals are different, but I would say you'll spend at least that amount or more at some point. When I started my business I was working full-time as a bench jeweler and used the extra income from that job to start my business. It took me a few years to build my business up by doing wholesale shows and art fairs. As my business grew, I tapered my full-time hours until I felt ready to transition to running my business full-time. Let's just say I worked a lot in the beginning.

What does "process-driven design" mean for your practice and your work?

Process-driven design for me means most of my inspiration comes from working with materials and processes. I rarely start new ideas by sketching pieces out. I tend to come up with ideas while working. I will be in the middle of making a few pieces, and then ideas pop into my head so I jot down a quick sketch and come back to it later. Or sometimes I just make a piece on a whim with materials and then sketch and refine my designs later. I feel the most creative when I'm using materials versus sitting and sketching out ideas. This may not be the most recommended way to develop pieces or a line due to silver being expensive and not having everything planned out, but it has been hard for me to work in reverse. I almost feel like I have a creative block!

Can you describe a day in your life as a store owner, jewelry designer, and jeweler?

I typically start my day by drinking a pot of tea and walking my dogs before getting ready for work. I normally arrive at the shop about an hour before I open. I collect all the jewelry from the safe and put it into the displays, tidy up the shop, and do some quick cleaning. Then I start my workday by catching up on emails and administrative work. I spend the remainder of the day going back and forth between admin work and helping customers. My production assistant works with me in the shop a few days a week. On those days we touch base about orders and work on new designs both for the shop and for my personal line. I am still adjusting to juggling the mix of bench work, custom work, admin, and shop life. I really have not had much time this year to make new work. When the days are a bit slow, I work at the bench focusing on making new pieces or custom work. My evenings are mostly spent relaxing, making dinner, and unwinding. I do occasionally work from home depending on what projects are happening and how busy the time of year is.

Do you listen to podcasts? What are a few of your favorites?

I do! I listen to a lot of crime and mystery. (Maybe a bit too much of it!) A few of my favorites are *Spooked*, *Radio Rental*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Court Junkie, Crime Junkie*, and *Anatomy of a Murder,* to name a few. I also enjoy listening to podcasts that tell stories or investigate history. A few other favorites are *This American Life*, *Snap Judgment*, *American History Tellers*, and *This Land*. I've found I prefer listening to storytelling instead of business while I work because it helps me focus, though I do enjoy an occasional business podcast episode.

Keep an eye on our Instagram @snagmetalsmith for upcoming opportunities to ask questions to a rotating selection of makers, educators, gallerists, curators, small business owners, and more.

IN-BETWEENNESS: OBJECTS THAT VOYAGE

BY SITENG WEI

THE TERM "IN-BETWEENNESS" COULD REFER to a state of overlapping, transition, integration, or ambiguity. In cultural and theoretical contexts—such as postcolonialism, gender and identity, and contemporary craftwork—it's used to conceptually open up discourse and deconstruct conventions. In-betweenness can inform how an artist perceives and engages the world, interrogating and questioning boundaries, norms, and histories. This concept can also be traced in the making process. For object-makers or jewelry artists, the realization of an idea must be achieved through the use of tools, techniques, and manipulation of materials; this process lies in between the makers' minds and their work. In-betweenness is also a property of contemporary jewelry and objects; they are vessels, vehicles, agents that voyage between concepts, boundaries, worlds—seeking to examine, explore, and illuminate.

Michaela Pegum (Australia)
jewelry artist, contemporary dancer

My practice is an exploration of felt experience. I work in explorative ways to develop material languages that are nuanced and sensory, creating hybrid substances whose components are held in states of "becoming" towards each other. For these works, I grew copper into velvet and organza through electroforming, creating a material that hovers between the known and the unknown, and meshes a naturally occurring substance with one that is humanly processed.

Each of the artists included here explores the concept of in-betweenness via a distinct approach. Michaela Pegum conveys her experience of thresholds through engaging with landscapes and the physical world, transforming the somatic experience into wearable and sculptural works with hybrid materials and making processes. Cara Johnson, an artist who situates herself in between human activity and the land, produces works with materials gathered in rural fields. Her wearable objects evoke an organic aesthetic while also questioning the consequences of human land usage. Claire McArdle examines the role of tools and machines in the making process. In the space between idea and the physical artwork, she crafts specially designed tools and devices; through using, engaging, and performing with them, she produces jewelry pieces that reveal how the maker, the tools, and the artworks are all interconnected.

In her interdisciplinary practice, Lindy McSwan works between different materials and processes, with a focus on special steel alloys that can be enameled on. Yi-Jen Chu situates her research between current social concerns and modern mass food production—interrogating careless overproduction and consumption through miniature kinetic objects that raise awareness on the issue. Yin-Yu Tseng explores tactile, kinetic, and sonic aspects of jewelry and objects, investigating the in-betweenness of playful sculptural objects and decorative wearable jewelry. Tianci Huang occupies the space between inner emotions and social norms by utilizing an expressive material language to depict conflict.

And finally, in my own work, I investigate the in-betweenness of Chinese and Australian culture, conveying the experience through jewelry that blends a Chinese aesthetic with Australian landscape imagery.

Above:
Michaela Pegum
Entangle, 2022
Copper, velvet, silver, bronze, timber, artificial leather table
137 x 41 x 60 cm
Photo: Matthew Santon

Opposite:
Michaela Pegum
All is intimate I, 2021
Copper, silver, organza, satin
15 x 10 x 16 cm
Photo: Matthew Santon

Lindy McSwan
To Cart Carry Convey (5 vessels), 2019–2022
Mild steel, vitreous enamel, ground iron ore
Dimensions vary
Photo: Fred Kroh

Opposite:
Cara Johnson
Cast back I, 2022
River red gum fence post, found baling twine, paper, iron, found silage wrap
Dimensions vary
Photo: Fred Kroh

Lindy McSwan (Australia)
metal artist

I explore the in-betweenness of material and process. The life cycle of steel is the focus of my recent practice. Ground iron ore blended with vitreous enamel was applied to these mild steel vessels. Their form and surface reflect on the industrial landscapes of the Australian iron and steel industry.

Cara Johnson (Australia)
jewelry and object artist

I began carving the dams that are scattered throughout a rural landscape, the scooped-out bits of earth, but as I worked the shapes changed and they came to represent my fingerprints—as though I'd held each piece of wood so tightly that I'd left my impression within it. Using each carved impression as a mold I cast paper to resemble leaf forms in an attempt to bring the wood and the paper closer to a time when they were trees.

Cara Johnson
Cast back II, 2022
River red gum fence post, found baling twine, paper, iron, found silage wrap
Dimensions vary
Photo: Fred Kroh

Claire McArdle
HOLD (Neckpieces), 2022
Recycled aluminum television antennae, recycled cotton cord
Dimensions vary
Photo by the artist

Claire McArdle (Australia)
jewelry and object artist

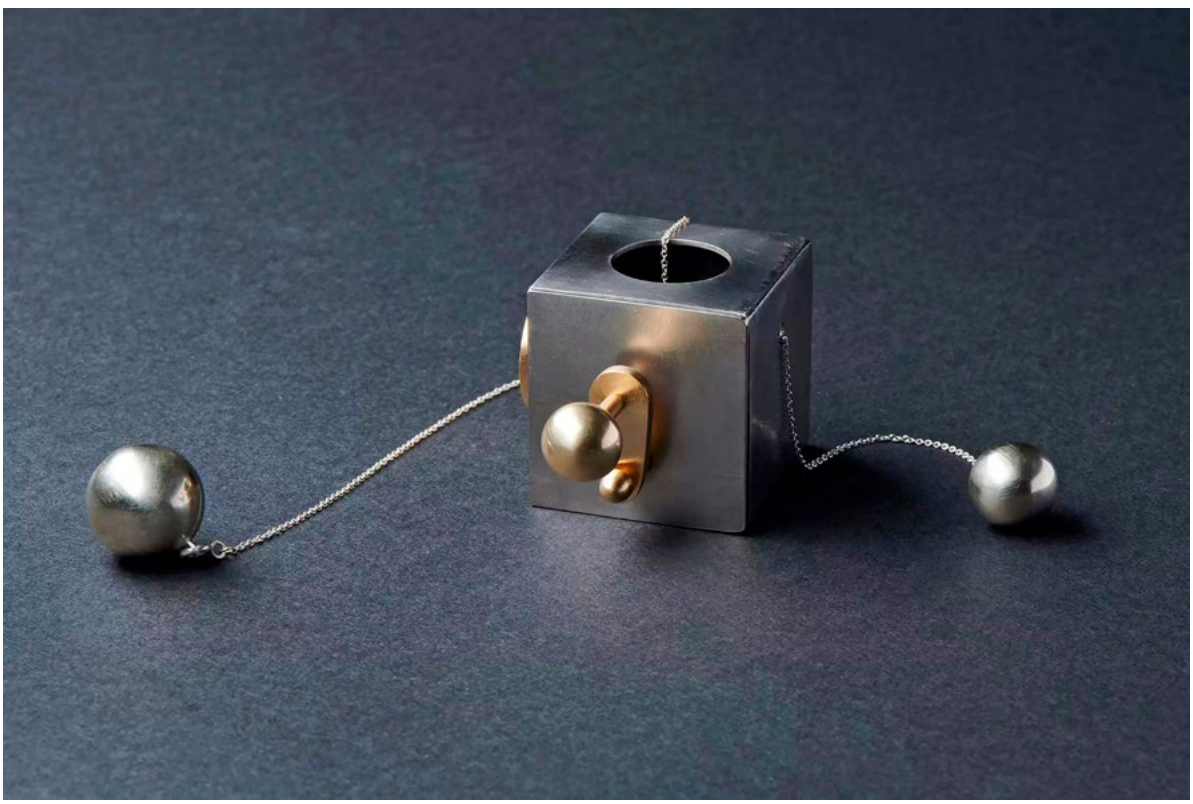
The maker picks up the long-handled saw frame, cuts a length off each of the five aluminum tubes being held in the tools, and threads them onto a cord to create a neckpiece. The holding tools loosen and tighten their grip as the tubes are adjusted. The act of making is then repeated.

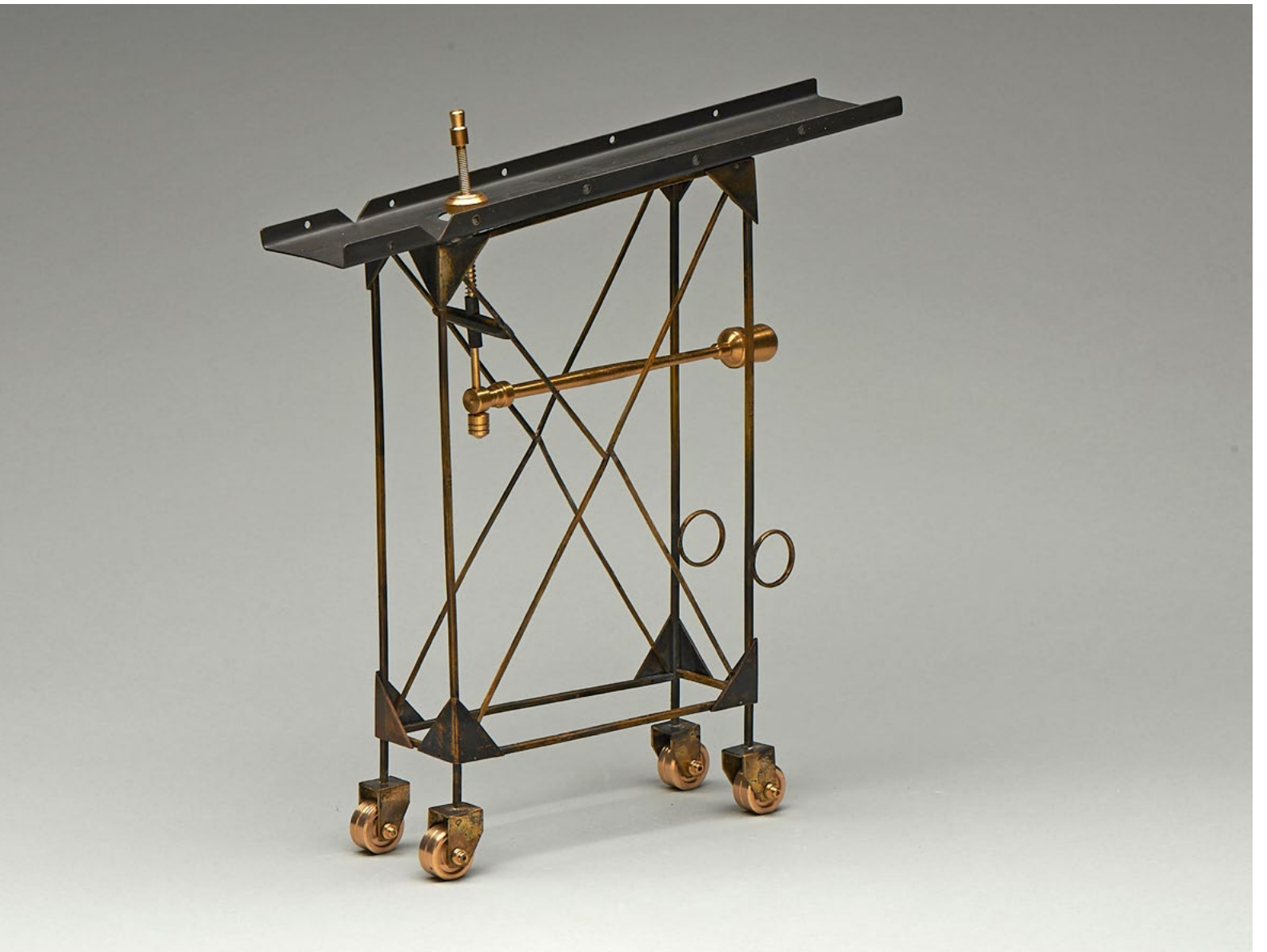
Claire McArdle
HOLD (Making Performance), 2022
Five holding tools (recycled aluminum, brass), saw frame (recycled steel, messmate eucalyptus, red ironbark), recycled aluminum television antennae, recycled cotton cord, linen boilersuit
Dimensions vary
Video document: 5 minutes 21 seconds
Documented by the artist

See the video on the artist's website: http://www.clairemcardle.com/hold.html

Yin-Yu Tseng (Taiwan/Australia)
craftsperson

Tactility speaks. It is for me the most intimate exploration between imagery and objects. The curious experience of touch, sound, and movement enlivens and unfolds our imagination to things.





Above:
Yi-Jen Chu
One-armed machine, 2019
Brass, copper, gilding metal,
tin plating
12 x 4.5 x 20 cm
Photo: Fred Kroh

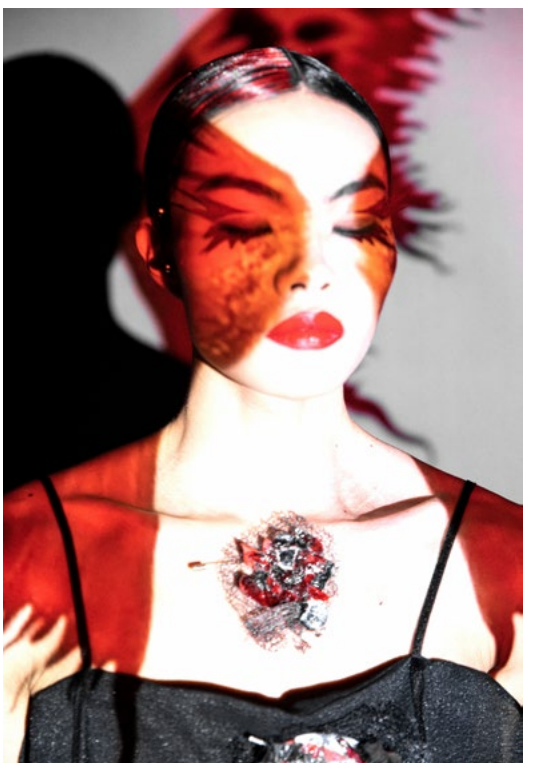
Opposite, top:
Yin-Yu Tseng
Ding, 2019
Silver, stainless steel
2 x 2 x 4 cm
Photo: Fred Kroh

Opposite, below:
Yin-Yu Tseng
Ling-ling, 2019
Titanium, brass, stainless steel,
silver, gilding metal, nickel, magnet
5 x 9 x 3.5 cm
Photo: Fred Kroh

Yi-Jen Chu (Taiwan/Australia)
jewelry artist and designer

These objects reference the historical progression of the development of machinery technology used to build a food assembly line, and the mechanical tasks necessary in the manufacture of food products. My objects are designed to invite human participation, as their purpose is to raise awareness of issues related to what I perceive as the shortcomings of a fully automated manufacturing system.

Tianci Huang
Heart Flow I, 2022
Ink-dyed and washed paper, mirror, lace, wire mesh, rubber mesh, screws
18 x 13 x 4 cm
Photo by the artist



Yuxiang Chen models a piece from the *Heart Flow* series.
Photo courtesy of the artist

Tianci Huang (China)
jewelry artist and designer

I explore the contractions and fluctuations of emotion in life. In our current society, there is a contradiction between social norms, common value, and the inner emotions of individuals. I investigate the complexity of self-expressions and emotional fluctuations, and convey my concepts through wearable works with expressive material languages.

Siteng Wei
Gold, 2019
Copolyester plastic, epoxy resin, nickel silver, sterling silver, metal leaf
50 x 36 x 30 mm
Photo: Fred Kroh

Siteng Wei
Gold Mountain II, 2019
Copolyester plastic, epoxy resin, sterling silver, stainless steel, gold leaf
60 x 57 x 14 mm
Photo: Fred Kroh

Siteng Wei (China)
teacher, jewelry artist, and designer

This series of works investigates my experience of Australian culture and landscapes as a Chinese foreigner. Through studying the history of Australian jewelry, Chinese immigrants, and the gold rush, I use plastic and 24k gold leaf to produce the effect of gold minerals, aiming to present the works as a parody of Australian gold rush jewelry.

CARSON TERRY: RECONSIDERING THE FAMILIAR

BY REBEKAH FRANK

Portrait of me in my show 44 Pieces of Furniture, 2023
Photo: Sofia Torres

CARSON TERRY (THEY/THEM) TAKES DOMESTIC OBJECTS—spoons, forks, drawer pulls, and combs—and reinterprets them, creating iterations that are recognizable but unfamiliar. Their interest in cultural ambiguity, disruption of normalcy, and material choice interrupts the viewer's expectation of the finished object, calling into question what is familiar and why. Their reinterpretations of everyday objects challenge expectations and ask the user to rethink the way these common, often underappreciated objects are cared for and considered.

Like many artists, Terry explored different materials before finding the one that best fit their voice. They spent eight years trying to be a ceramicist—four in high school and four in community sculpture classes—struggling to reconcile the curvaceous and voluminous forms that exist comfortably in clay with their preference for the crisp, sharp lines and angles that populated their drawings. Then Terry discovered metalsmithing at Penland School of Craft through short courses taught by Fred Fenster, Amy Tavern, and Joanna Gollberg, and they learned the careful skill necessary to work in nonferrous metals: how to execute an invisible solder seam, the need for precision in setting a stone, and how to buff surfaces to a uniform finish. They brought this knowledge with them for a two-year stint at Oregon College of Art and Craft (OCAC) in pursuit of a metals degree—before their interest shifted to iron, which wasn't supported by the OCAC facilities. They continued to take classes at Penland School of Craft, shifting to working with steel in the Iron Studio with Joseph Burwell, Hiroko Yamada, Jay Burnham-Kidwell, and Elizabeth Brim, eventually making the move to teaching workshops themself.

Terry's training is visible in the "toolness" of their tableware—for example, in the hinged interventions in the handles of some spoons and forks. While a hinge is a place of movement, it is also a way to join sundry bits, to bring disparate parts together in a delightful union. Terry's stacked pocket-sized multitool contains a spoon, a fork, and a knife—which appear familiar enough—but the utensils don't hinge open in the same orientation. This is because Terry strives to individualize each object they make, with the whirls of decorative finials, or the uneven teeth of combs, or the inconsistency of spoons' bowls

Spattering of forged floral wares and clay: *floral spoons*, *floral forks*, *floral combs*, *rose comb*, *rose drawer pulls*, *floral shapes*, *wall flower hook*, 2023
Forged mild steel, Plastilina modeling clay
Various dimensions
Photo: William Matheson

providing a distinct charisma. Their forged tableware radiates eccentricity, an uncharacteristic wonkiness in objects that are, essentially, tools to feed our faces.

Terry is interested in the human desire to imbue objects with a sense of being or agency that runs counter to the general expectation of these particular objects. They want the user to consider each object's presence, feeling, and impact—to create a relationship with it. This practice derives from Terry's own projection on the things around them, which has roots in their childhood—a time when, Terry says, "I gendered everything: colors, toothbrushes, cups, silverware. I obsessed over the energetic and structural elements of these inanimate objects. Spoons were men because of their strong practical sensibility, and forks were women because they, in my mind, were shapely and beautiful."[1]

Terry challenges the accepted trio of spoon, knife, and fork and their own assumptions of an object's characteristics. In one of their spoon utensils, the traditional handle has been replaced with tong-like pinchers, which requires the user to hold the spoon's bowl to use the tongs. These hybrid objects make functional sense yet, at the same time, they are a jarring mash-up, upending the way a spoon, for example, is "supposed" to be held. Another undeniably convenient but odd joining is the flosser, a spool of colorful dental floss that strings across a bow-shaped fork attached to an eating implement—positioning a useful tool close at hand. Terry aims to reveal and reconstruct cultural expectations of objects by making subtle changes to items that for centuries have been shaped roughly the same.[2]

Terry pushes back against the assumption that the forks, spoons, and other implements commonly accepted in Western society are the final, best iteration of the triadic relationship of mouth, food, and tool. Terry plays with activation and interruption, with unexpected hinge points and sporks with their tiny tines oriented perpendicular to the handle—and unlikely mergers, like a spoon and fork at opposite ends of a single handle.

Terry's commitment to mild steel collides with the public's understanding of the ideal materiality for flatware, now most often made of noncorrosive

Above:
Multitool: spoon, knife, and fork, 2021
Forged mild steel
2½ x 1¼ x 1 in.
Photo by the artist

Right:
Spork, fork + spoon, spoon, 2021
Forged mild steel
8 x 1½ x ¼ in.
12 x 1½ x ¼ in.
6 x 1½ x ¼ in.
Photo: Isaac Koval

Opposite:
Combs, 2023
Forged mild steel
Dimensions vary
Photo: William Matheson

metal alloys like stainless steel or aluminum. Terry's spoons, forks, hybrid implements, and "multitools" are all made to be used, but people often express doubt, wondering if steel implements are "safe." The subject of metal toxicity concerns Terry deeply. They are aware that the time spent touching, forging, and grinding their metal means they are also absorbing and breathing small particles of metal that could cause health problems in the future. When Terry began to explore metalworking years earlier, the relative purity of gold and silver appealed to them, but were not affordable. The alloying agents in bronze (tin), brass (zinc), and nickel silver (nickel) gave them pause, as does the chromium in stainless steel and aluminum in general. Terry's concern about the health implications of materials isn't born from paranoia or hypochondria—many artists develop allergies and other health impacts from exposure to their materials. Terry opted for mild steel, which is made of iron alloyed with carbon, because it provides less risk of metal toxicity to both creator and user.

Despite the tool-like quality of Terry's utensils, there is a softness in the forms, an irregularity counter to the precision of a mass-produced fork or a meticulously forged spoon. And Terry's time at the wheel is apparent in their objects; the utensils' handles retain the mark of the hammer just as a piece of clay might retain the mark of the hand. Terry shapes the steel in a way that retains surface inconsistencies, allowing the personality of their hand and the resiliency of the material to converge in easy conversation. There is a sketch-like quality to these objects that references the way a hand-drawn line lies imperfectly on a page. Their way of working is quite intentional.

There is a disconnect between mild steel and the cast iron skillets or the chef-quality knives that are treasured in active kitchens. Just like a cast iron skillet, Terry's utensils require care and consideration. They need to be seasoned with oil and not abandoned in the sink to rust or otherwise used carelessly. These implements require people to claim these uneasy, unfamiliar objects, to take the time to care for them, learn to use them, and respect them. The users must adjust to the irregularity, the unexpected nature of the artist's hand.

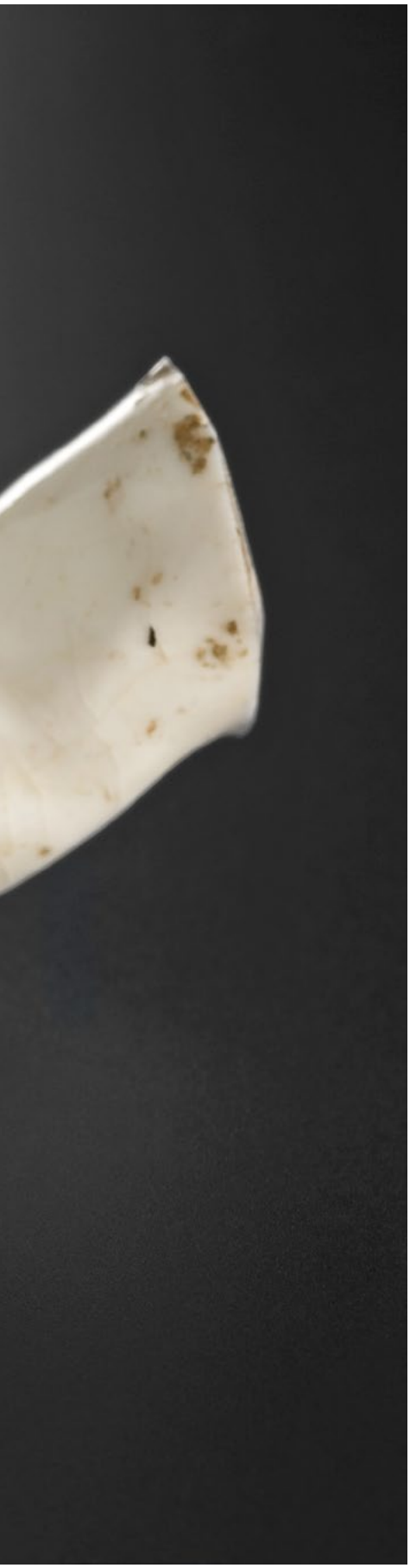
While the majority of Terry's work exists on a domestic plane, they developed highly technical welding, forging, and fabrication skills that opened opportunities for collaborative relationships. For the past eight years, Terry has been working with Andrea Zittel on her designs to fabricate the utilitarian objects that populate A–Z West, an artistic experiment that brings together artists, writers, and thinkers to engage the desert and its communities in Joshua Tree, California.[3] The objects Terry creates for Zittel are mostly home furniture, precisely fabricated from steel, that provide gridded comfort to the living spaces of the eighty-acre desert institute. The ability to work steel with both precision and ease conveys Terry's deep commitment to their material and their comfort with the craft.

In 1964 at the First World Congress on Craftsmen, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, an Indian social reformer, freedom activist, and craft advocate, said that eating calls for "as much satisfaction from the right kind of spoon as from the food to be eaten."[4] Today, there are many chef and artisan collaborations that highlight the intimacy of the utensil as conduit between the plate and the person. Terry thinks a lot about how design impacts our lives: the way we sit at the table, the way we use a fork, the way our bodies adjust to everything we engage. Terry has participated in programs like those of Steinbeisser and Maker Table that bring together chefs, artisans, and the public as collaborators on the experience of eating—which, in the words of Steinbeisser, showcases

"pieces [that] don't follow the normal rules of usability."[5]

While some of Terry's combinations are unexpected, they make a certain kind of sense. These small interventions in familiar, everyday objects bring a sense of discomfort, an interruption of what's come to be expected. For some there is comfort in conformity—the sameness of apples in the supermarket being more comforting than unique, deformed apples on a tree. Terry's objects invite people to ask questions about what it means to be comfortable: comfortable with mass production, comfortable with expected forms, comfortable with material. By making work stubbornly out of mild steel, by making recognizable objects strange, Terry invites people to reconsider the familiar.

1 Carson Terry, "Kitchen Heirlooms: Carson Terry," *American Craft,* June/July 2020, 35. **2** Ibid. **3** Andrea Zittel, https://hdts.site. **4** Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, "Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay on 'The Right Kind of Spoon,'" *Garland Magazine*, March 1, 2023, https://garlandmag.com/article/kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-spoon. **5** "About," Steinbeisser, 2023, https://steinbeisser.org/about.



Hold Me as I Land

by matt lambert

I Love It When We're Cruising Together

Hold me as I land
I'm sure you understand ...

Now we're on solid ground
I find it was quicksand ...

I had to give myself away
So the wind can teach me what to do again

—Seinabo Sey, "Hold Me As I Land"

CRUISING

I was first introduced to the concept of cruising as a method within artistic research by Alpesh Kantilal Patel when he was an outside mentor during my time in the Critical Craft Studies MA program at Warren Wilson College.

It was during this program that I began to see craft beyond its material silos.

Previous spread:
Elizabeth Shaw
New Hand, 2009
Found broken ceramic, reused and recycled sterling silver
50 x 20 x 12 mm
Photo: Michelle Bowden Visuall

Opposite:
Liana Pattihis
Too Hot to Handle (brooch/vessel), 2022
From the *Scentimental* series
Porcelain pieces from a Japanese cup and saucer, patinated silver chain, glass perfume vial with screw top, fixing agent, stainless steel
8.5 x 7 x 3 cm
Photo by the artist

The term "cruising" is threaded in multiple ways here. It has connotations to sex, desire, pleasure, wandering, and play. It emphasizes the journey and not the destination. I view cruising within a conversation of material and object-making. I view it as the time spent with material, as the acceptance that the material existed and was in a process before I encountered it, and that after the material leaves my hands it will continue to be: used, worn, held in attempted static perpetuity (via personal or museum collections), or reassembled into another state or form. Cruising is a way of viewing the role of maker as part of a larger process, and breaks with the concept of singular authorship. Instead, makers are participants in larger cycles and systems.

Cruising as a method is in relationship to what Irit Rogoff, theorist and Professor of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London, would call a vibration.[1] As spoken-word poet Timothy "Speed" Levitch says in the 1998 documentary *The Cruise*, which follows him on his days as a tour guide through New York City:

> I am cruising currently right now, I am cruising because I have dedicated myself to all that is creative and destructive in my life right now, and I'm equally in love with every aspect of my life, and all the ingredients that have caused me turmoil and all the ingredients that have caused me glory. I am the living whispered warning in the Roman general's ear, "glory is fleeting," and in that verb, that active verb "fleeting," there I live, there I reside. I have dedicated myself to the idiom "I don't know," and I am in love with the frantic chaos of this limitless chaos of this universe.[2]

Just as rearranging furniture creates different experiences within a home, the rearrangement of materials, objects, and moments of encounter create space for new meanings and understandings to occur

The tour bus from which Levitch launches into a feverish narration, sharing historical facts, songs, poems, humor, and casual conversation, becomes a visualization of the boarding and un-boarding. It is an action that reflects the complexity of New York City—its past, present, and future—and where the passengers and Levitch exist together in a constant state of motion, and how he and the passengers are cruising before and will continue to cruise after they are on the bus.

Cruising manifests in many ways. I see making as a way to think, to push theory and narrative into physicality. In this process, objects are not "the work," but rather the objects and writing together become material that participates in making the work.

I am locating "the work" within the process: in the assemblage of materials, objects, geographic location, use; the conversations and experiences that lead up to an exhibition or finished object—and how these conversations and use continue beyond. Just as rearranging furniture creates different experiences within a home, the rearrangement of materials, objects, and moments of encounter create space for new meanings and understandings to occur.

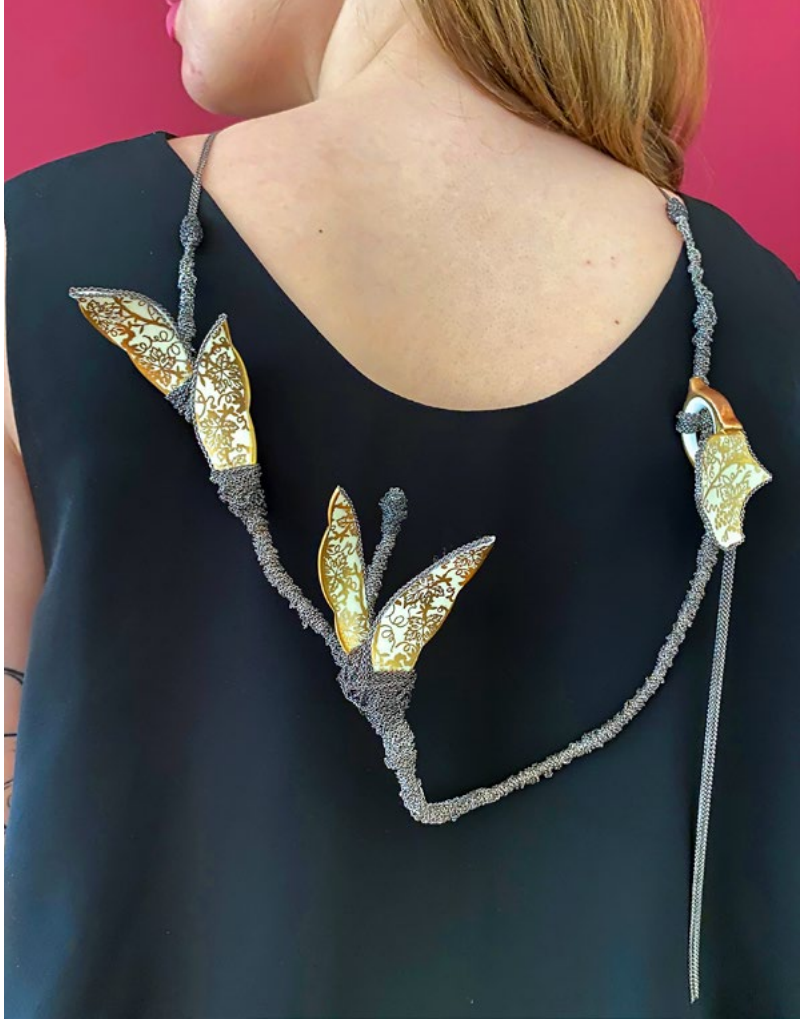
Gord Peteran
Early Table, 2004
Found wood, string
33 x 42 x 20 in.
Photo: Elaine Brodie
William Anderson, Toronto

Gord Peteran

This rearrangement can be found in singular objects. Taking objects that once had an obvious function and working with them to either find new possibilities or restate the original function. Gord Peteran's (@gordpeteran) work *Prosthetic* takes a chair that has lost its function to support a human body through damage or excessive wear and crafted a prosthetic that unobtrusively holds the previous function of the chair by creating a removable brace. Peteran's prosthetic seat is reliant on the chair's structure to maintain functionality while making viewers and potential users acutely aware of the chair's function, its chair-ness.

Peteran's *Early Table* uses segments of collected branches, bound by string, to form a table. The work makes us reconsider wood as a common material by shifting from milled wood to its pre-industrially processed form, with bark and irregularities intact. Through this simple material shift, the object offers reflection by drawing our attention to what a table is, and what it is for. Peteran is still processing the wood through his intervention, but has chosen to do so in a fashion that is not typically expected in Western traditions of functional wood furniture.

Gord Peteran
Prosthetic, 2001
Found chair, brass
36 x 16 x 16 in.
Photo: Elaine Brodie
Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee



Liana Pattihis
Fragmented Vine (necklace), 2021
To mend my broken heart series
Porcelain pieces from a Royal Stafford 8464 teacup, silver, patinated silver chain, fixing agent
97 x 7.5 cm
Photo by the artist

Liana Pattihis

Artist Liana Pattihis (@lianapattihis) uses damaged and discarded porcelain objects in her work. She further breaks down the fragments, then works in a dialogue with the shards to reconfigure them, creating new forms or assemblages. Pattihis's process references Kintsugi, a Japanese mending process wherein gold is used to highlight the repair lines of a broken vessel while restoring its function. Pattihis joins vessel shards with chain to create wearable forms. Once Pattihis takes an object—the vessel—and turns it into a "thing," the shards then create a new object.

Bill Brown unpacks the concept of a "thing" in his 2001 essay "Thing Theory," which has evolved into a two-part, edited compilation of contributed essays.[3] "Thing Theory" takes, for example, a door knob, an object most of us use daily and something we don't often think about. It is the kind of object that we are usually only made hyperaware of when its expected function stops or breaks. The breaking, or when its function for the user is lost, causes it to become a thing. The object's thing-ness is created by the removal of its usual function for the user.

Thing-ness, I would also pose, occurs when we encounter something of which we do not know its function. Found objects as material become of particular interest when thinking about thing-ness. For me, "found object" is a divisive term. What is an unfound object? What parameters qualify something as found? Secondhand stores ask us to pay for objects made from "raw" materials that have gone through many steps of being processed, refined, and manipulated to reach a purchase-ready state. There is no escaping a material that isn't already in a process, already cruising. We decenter the human as author when we actualize the organic processes along with human interventions as part of material cycles. Thing-ness is only in relation to the individual. When we cruise with these encountered things we cycle with them in search of use.

Thing-ness is only in relation to the individual.

When we cruise with these encountered things we cycle with them in search of use.

Right:
Liana Pattihis
Handle with Love (brooch/vessel), 2021
Scentimental series
Porcelain pieces from a Japanese cup, silver, patinated silver chain, glass perfume vial with screw top, fixing agent, stainless steel
9 x 4.5 x 2.5 x 13 cm
Photo by the artist

Clockwise, from top left:

Liana Pattihis
Green Aura (brooch/vessel), 2021
Scentimental series
Porcelain pieces from a Japanese saucer, fragments from a wine glass, glass perfume vial with screw top, patinated silver chain, low-firing enamel, fixing agent, stainless steel
8 x 7 x 2 cm
Photo by the artist

Liana Pattihis
Masquerade (pendant/vessel), 2021
Scentimental series
Porcelain pieces from a Japanese cup, silver, patinated silver chain, glass perfume vial with screw top, fixing agent, stainless steel
10 x 8 x 4 cm
Photo by the artist

Liana Pattihis
Picking up the pieces
pink brooch (brooch), 2020
To mend my broken heart series
Porcelain pieces from an English vintage dessert plate, 12k-gold-filled chain, fixing agent, stainless steel
14 x 11 x 3 cm
Photo by the artist

Shaw constructs
scaffolding and braces
for these objects,
a way to animate them

Elizabeth Shaw
Rescued Ducks, 2017
Damaged ceramic ornaments,
recycled and reused sterling silver
65 x 20 x 60 mm
Photo: Michelle Bowden Visuall

Elizabeth Shaw
Rescued Dog, 2017
Found ceramic head, waste
extrusion from a building
site, recycled sterling silver,
titanium, cash cards
110 x 80 x 30 mm
Photo: Michelle Bowden Visuall

Elizabeth Shaw

Elizabeth Shaw (@lizshawjewelleryobjects) made the decision to convert a plot of land, turn over the soil, and plant seeds that would produce something to nourish the body. A process planned with intentional labor and tending. What Shaw was not prepared for in the process was to encounter a small piece of metal with few clues of its previous function. A partially formed or eroded object that seemed out of place in the earth. What is commonly called a found object.

Shaw engages with the fragments that she encounters in the garden, on the street, or that are passed to her by those who know her work. She constructs scaffolding and braces for these objects, a way to animate them, sometimes referring to their assumed previous state and at other times pushing them into unexpected forms and implied uses.

Above:
Elizabeth Shaw
Hand-Saw-Horse, 2019
Found plastic horse head, ceramic arm, saw blade, reused cane, recycled sterling silver
105 x 30 x 20 mm (closed)
Photo: Michelle Bowden Visuall

Right:
Elizabeth Shaw
Pocket Knife, 2011
Found ceramic, found blade, recycled sterling silver
80 x 50 x 55 mm (closed)
Photo: Michelle Bowden Visuall

Elizabeth Shaw
Nail Head Bracelet, 2017
Found nails, steel wire,
reused sterling silver
80 x 70 x 15 mm
Photo: Michelle
Bowden Visuall

Elizabeth Shaw
Nail Head Ring, 2017
Found nail, reused
sterling silver
40 x 10 x 30 mm
Photo: Michelle
Bowden Visuall

Cruising is a way of approaching making that decenters the individual author.

It connects us with systems and challenges mastery and control.

Liana Pattihis
Social Butterfly (brooch/vessel), 2021
Scentimental series
Porcelain pieces from a Japanese dessert plate, patinated silver chain, glass fragments from a wine glass, glass perfume vial with screw top, fixing agent, stainless steel
95 x 85 x 25 mm
Photo by the artist

I see craft as a process in motion. One in which we join as makers. We jump onto something already moving, just as a tourist jumps onto a tour bus mid-route. We ride on this process until we desire to get off. This point of departure could be thought of as the moment we consider something "done." The works of Peteran, Pattihis, and Shaw grapple with aspects of process in motion. For Peteran, it is the motion of his encounter with an object or material that highlights their essential qualities—the "chair-ness" or "table-ness" in these examples. Through reconfiguration of a physical form Pattihis highlights the multifariousness of functional and nonfunctional: to hold (liquid) or to hold onto (a body). Shaw grapples with the encounter of materiality, cycling with it to search for function, choosing to imagine how something possibly existed before encountering or conceptualizing new functions.

The ride is a cruise, and even though we may stop on a mutual path, ourselves and what we make continue to move. Move on to other work, to be used, to break, and to be remade. As Simon Ofield states regarding approaching cruising as research (and I would include it in making): "You can never be quite sure if you will find what you are looking for, or if you will come across something you never knew you wanted, or even knew existed."[4]

Objects are bought and sold, worn and used. Our hands continue on to other movements. Each encounter with material becomes a conversation. A negotiation between body and substrate in search of something. How invasive are we to be? To cut? To file? Do we meddle with a material or accept it as it exists when we encounter it?

Cruising is a way of approaching making that decenters the individual author. It connects us with systems and challenges mastery and control. Nothing in this thinking is held in perpetuity, and we are reminded that we are all part of something larger.

1 Irit Rogoff, "Irit Rogoff: Becoming Research," *Sonic Acts Festival 2019: Hereafter*, February 22, 2019, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, YouTube video, 30:38, uploaded April 3, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3AcgQoGaSU. **2** Timothy "Speed" Levitch, *The Cruise*, documentary directed by Bennet Miller, Artisan Entertainment, 1998, 1:11:57. **3** Bill Brown, ed., *Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bill Brown, *Other Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019). **4** Simon Ofield, "Cruising the Archive," *Journal of Visual Culture* 4, no. 3 (2005): 357, https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412905058353.

PRESTON JONES

Applying Contemporary Inspiration to an Ancient Craft

BY ANN GLASSCOCK

Previous spread:
Preston Jones
Agave Pitcher, 2017
Sterling silver, 16k gold
11 in. tall
Photo: Paul Grossmann

Opposite:
Agave Pitcher (detail)

Right:
Preston Jones
Bumblebee and Snake Ring, 2022
18k white gold, enamel,
old mine cut diamond
Size 7
Photo by the artist

DENSELY ORNAMENTED WITH A PROFUSION OF STRIKING PLANTS,

Preston Jones's silver *Agave Pitcher* is magnificent. Gold accentuates the flower stalks of these spectacular succulents, while the leaves draw your eye up and around the body. Although made from sterling silver, the pitcher has an almost liquid quality. Suppleness emerges opposite the handle, which resembles the scaly underbelly of a snake. This is an allusion to the Aztec god Ehecatl, one of the manifestations of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent. Ehecatl fell in love with Mayahuel, who became the goddess of the agave plant. Her spirit moves through the smooth and prickly leaves of Jones's pitcher. When making this vessel, Jones traveled to botanical gardens and agave farms in Mexico to study plants native to the region. His love of nature often translates into his designs—both holloware and jewelry alike.

Jones created the *Agave Pitcher* for the Museum of the City of New York's (MCNY) 2017 exhibition *New York Silver: Then and Now*, in which artists were invited to make works of art inspired by New York silver in the museum's collection.[1] Jones's creation is a reimagining of Tiffany & Co.'s *Askos* (c. 1873–1878),[2] which is heavily decorated with dogwood blossoms and fern fronds. A type of small vessel, askoi date to antiquity and were used to pour liquids. Their organic, globular forms resemble leather wineskins. But Jones's pitcher is intended to hold drinks made from agave, such as pulque or mezcal. In this work, design and form effortlessly meet function.

Jones has been learning the art of silversmithing for over fifteen years. In 2005, he enrolled at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. Though he'd taken many art classes in high school, he didn't plan to major in art. SUNY's specialized courses, however, drew him in. Professor John Cogswell in particular noticed how much time Jones spent in the university's state-of-the-art studio for his Intro to Silversmithing class and urged him to rethink his area of focus. In 2010, Jones received a Bachelor of Science degree in Metal.

Prior to graduation, Jones accomplished two important goals. First, he spent a year at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City studying with the silversmith and jewelry artist Wendy Yothers, now Jones's mentor.[3] According to Yothers, "Preston's work speaks for itself. It's courageous, with a hint of humor. He is always inventing new solutions to accomplish his creative visions. It has been said that to teach is to learn twice. I've learned from Preston as much or even more than he has learned from me."[4] Second, Jones traveled to Thailand. There, he earned the credits he needed for a minor in Environmental Studies while also learning a variety of techniques from local metalsmiths.

"PRESTON'S WORK SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. IT'S *courageous*, WITH A HINT OF HUMOR."

EACH BOWL IS MADE FROM EIGHT STRIPS OF METAL—SYMBOLIZING THE *Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism*

In Thailand's "Monk's Bowl Village," located in Bangkok's Soi Ban Baat neighborhood, Jones learned how to make alms bowls, which monks use to carry their belongings and accept donations. These are often crafted from steel and copper, and only a few families remain who still create these vessels by hand. Each family member often carries out a specific task, such as hammering or brazing. The brazing is particularly important, since each bowl is made from eight strips of metal—symbolizing the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism. Those who visit Ban Baat's tiny village rarely have the opportunity to make these unique vessels, but the craftspeople recognized Jones's eagerness to learn and invited him to partake in an ancient tradition.

During that same trip, Jones traveled north to Chiang Mai, Thailand, to Wat Sri Suphan, also known as the "Silver Temple." For five weeks, he worked alongside a dozen silversmithing monks, two of them master craftspeople, learning their approach to chasing and repoussé work. In exchange for the knowledge

Preston Jones at Soi Ban Baat (Monk's Bowl Village) in Bangkok, 2009.

Photos: Benjamin Hecker

Preston Jones at Wat Sri Suphan in Chiang Mai, 2010, doing high-relief chasing and repoussé.

Photos: Benjamin Hecker

Preston Jones
Engagement Ring, 2022
18k white gold, enamel, old mine cut diamond
Size 7
Photo by the artist

they shared with Jones, he helped make shingles, wall panels, and a Buddha head.

After graduation, Jones continued to travel. In 2018, he spent two weeks in the town of Santa Clara del Cobre near Pátzcuaro in Michoacán, Mexico, where he befriended several coppersmiths. This acquaintanceship allowed him to practice a unique style of hot-raising large vessels—a cross between blacksmithing and the typical raising of annealed sheet metal—that often involves multiple people swinging sledgehammers during the forging process. Thus, while working with a group of craftspeople who help keep the copper industry alive in this region, Jones was able to take part in a tradition that dates back several hundred years.

Jones intends to keep traveling the world to hone his skills. When I asked where he plans to go next, he replied, "To India, to bang out some bidri."[5] His time spent as a sort of itinerant apprentice would seem to contrast sharply with his career as a silversmith at Tiffany & Co., known for its elegant tea and coffee services, handsome trophies, and other stunning pieces of hollowware. But Jones remains a seeker even at home, actively searching for opportunities to practice his craft.

Preston Jones
Mace, 2021
Sterling silver, black walnut
31¾ x 5¼ in.
College of Optometry,
State University of New York
Photo: Joe Gold

In 2021, to honor the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, the College of Optometry at SUNY invited silversmiths to submit designs for a new mace. Carried by an official at commencement, the mace is a scepter-like object that is a symbol of scholarship, integrity, and authority. At SUNY, when it is presented to the president, it signals the start of the commencement ceremony.

SUNY's request for proposals detailed that the mace was to be primarily made of silver—historically, the medium of choice—and its design elements needed to represent the College of Optometry's mission of education, research, and service in the study of vision and the eye. Accepting the challenge, Jones walked around New York City looking for inspiration. He strolled by brownstones on the Upper West Side, walked over and under bridges, meandered through Grand Central Terminal, and visited SUNY's campus. "It was like a treasure hunt," he shares. "It was a level of detail I hadn't explored in the city."

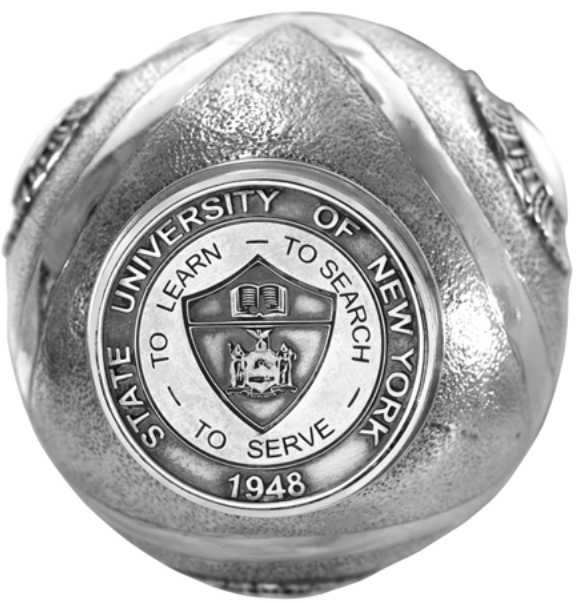
Needless to say, Jones's design was chosen (making him one of a select number of American silversmiths commissioned to make academic maces).[6] The top of his mace resembles a miniature cityscape. A series of arches represents the five bridges going into Manhattan. The X-shaped pattern on the inside of each curve recalls the edges of subway platforms—while the tops of the arches are flanked by shapes reminiscent of lampposts in Bryant Park. Above these, a stepped circular design includes three buildings that look much like the crown of the Chrysler Building.[7] The whole is surmounted by three eagles; known for their keen eyesight, they are a fitting symbol for the College of Optometry.

Three plaques encircle the head. Together, their imagery—a professor instructing a student, a scientist looking into a microscope, and a doctor performing an eye exam—illustrates the mission of the College: education, research, and service.

CARRIED BY AN OFFICIAL AT COMMENCEMENT, THE MACE IS A SCEPTER-LIKE OBJECT THAT IS A SYMBOL OF SCHOLARSHIP, *integrity*, AND AUTHORITY.

Plaques on mace head illustrating the College's mission: education, research, and service.

Photos: Joe Gold



Left: Foot of the mace depicting the nose and eyeglass motif (above) and SUNY seal (below).

Opposite: Plaques on the mace's shaft showing the College's logo and noting its fiftieth anniversary.

Photos: Joe Gold

Lower down the black walnut staff, Jones formed two plaques around the curves of the wood: one notes the College's fiftieth anniversary, while the other depicts its logo. Finishing off the bottom is the SUNY seal with yet another clever design element. Around the top of the sphere appears to be a classic egg-and-dart motif, but upon closer inspection one will notice little noses and eyeglasses.

Jones used a variety of techniques to create the mace, including raising, forming, chasing, sculpting, soldering, and polishing—as well as computer-aided design (CAD), which involved mold-making and casting. Jones told me: "I was one of those people whose romantic idea of the right way to make something was [only] by hand. Finally, in my metalsmithing career I'm starting to embrace CAD as the incredible tool it is." Altogether, Jones's mace doesn't just combine the ancient craft of silversmithing with contemporary technology—it also illustrates the importance of preserving and honoring traditions.

From whimsical vessels to ceremonial maces, Jones's creations demonstrate the value that silver hollowware serves in the twenty-first century. Some may feel that silver has lost a bit of its luster, but commissions from academic institutions, museums, and private collectors can help elevate this timeless medium to a place of prominence once again.

Preston Jones in his studio connecting the mace head to the staff.

Photo courtesy of the artist

JONES'S MACE DOESN'T JUST COMBINE THE ANCIENT CRAFT OF SILVERSMITHING WITH CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGY—IT ALSO ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING AND *honoring traditions.*

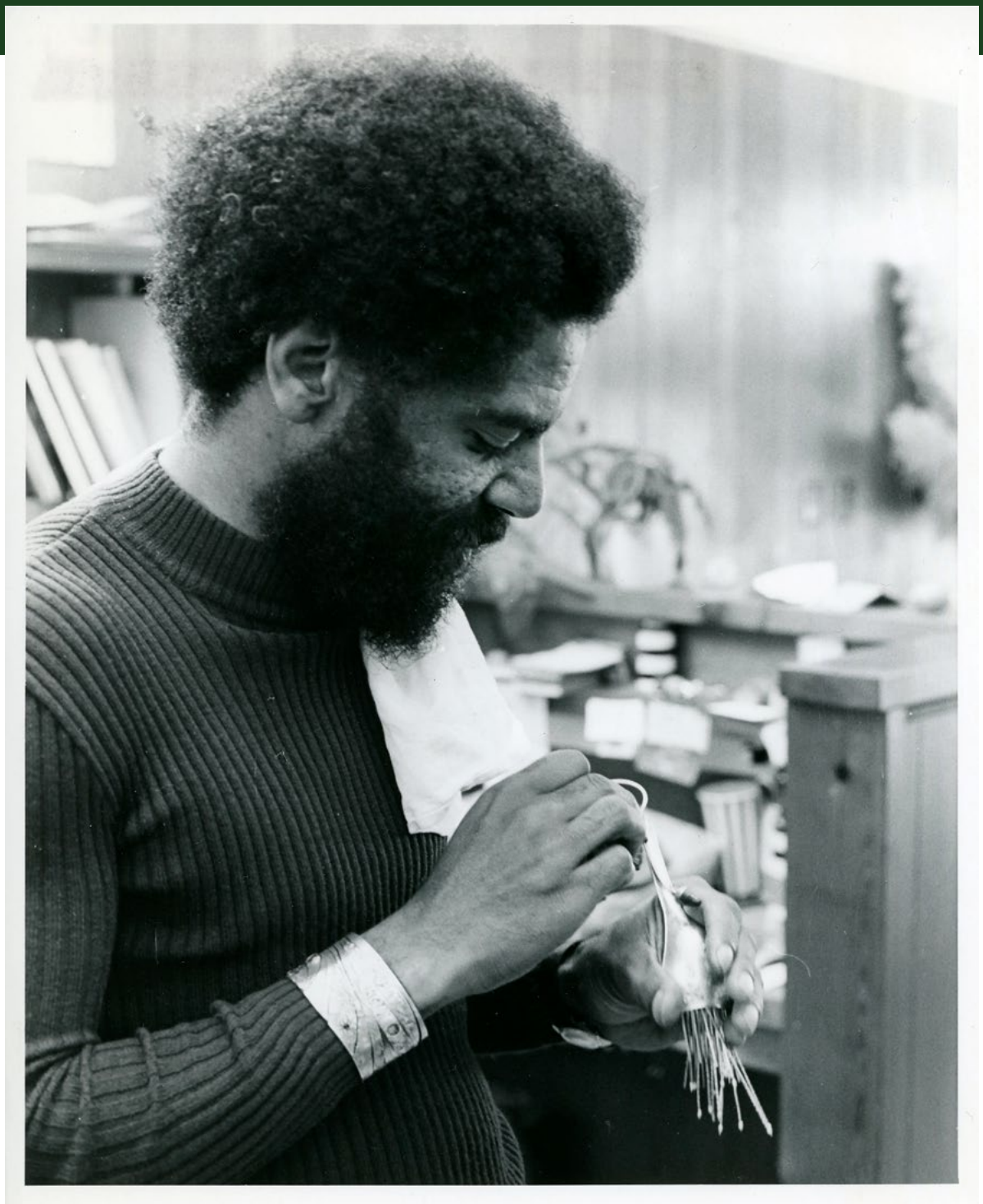
The author wishes to thank Jeannine Falino, independent curator, for her support in writing this article, as well as Dawn Rigney, vice president for institutional advancement of the SUNY College of Optometry.

1 See Marisa Bartolucci, "Polished Performances," *The Magazine Antiques* (September/October 2017): 78, https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/polished-performances; and Jeannine Falino, "Twenty-First-Century Silver: Not Your Grandmother's Tea Set," *Metalsmith* 38, no. 1 (2018): 26–35; https://snagmetalsmith.org/product/metalsmith-magazine-vol-38-no-1-2018. **2** See Tiffany & Co., *Askos*, c. 1873–1878, silver, 10½ in. Museum of the City of New York, gift of Paul Guarner in honor of John Daley, 2003.32.1. **3** For her latest publication, see Wendy Yothers and Alba Cappellieri with Susanna Testa, *Digital Meets Handmade: Jewelry Design, Manufacture, and Art in the Twenty-First Century* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2021). Yothers's work can be found in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum of the City of New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. **4** Wendy Yothers, email correspondence with the author, March 13, 2023. **5** Craftsmen in southern India have been making bidriware since the fourteenth century. These striking objects are made from a metal alloy. Designs are engraved onto the surface and then inlaid with silver. Artisans then use a paste to darken the nonsilver areas, leaving the precious metal to shine. All Preston Jones quotes are from a Zoom interview with the author, February 16, 2023. **6** Others include Hudson Roysher (1911–1993), Kurt Matzdorf (1922–2008), and Olaf Skoogfors (1930–1975). **7** The Chrysler Building motif is a nod to the finials Wendy Yothers used on her *Gotham Tête-à-Tête Beverage Service*. Yothers made the set for the MCNY's exhibition *New York Silver: Then and Now* (2017).

DECIPHERING A PENDANT

By LaMar R. Gayles Jr.

A Study of BOB JEFFERSON



Artist Bob Jefferson working on artwork, 1971.

Photograph, Oakland Post Photograph Collection, MS 169, African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library. Oakland, California.

Previous spread:

Bob Jefferson
Pendant, 1968
Fabricated, forged silver, bronze, [semi-precious] stone
9 x 2 x ¾ in.
Courtesy of the Museum of Arts and Design, New York: gift of the Johnson Wax Company through the American Craft Council, 1977.2.39
Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

Bob Jefferson (1943–unknown), was a Black jewelry artist and educator. Jefferson received a bachelor's degree in sculpture from Southern University, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In the 1960s Jefferson began teaching himself the art of making jewelry, and later traveled to Europe, where he refined his craft in goldsmithing and silversmithing.

Jefferson is noted to have mainly worked in California within the San Francisco Bay Area. He is most cited and referenced from the 1960s through the 1980s in exhibition catalogs and other texts, ranging from *California Black Craftsmen* (1970, curated by Evangeline Montgomery), *California Design: The Legacy of West Coast Craft and Style* (2005, by Jo Lauria and Suzanne Baizerman), and *Jewelry Concepts and Technology* (1982, by Oppi Untracht), to name just a few. But despite the documentation of his work, it is not known when his artistic practice ended—nor if or when he passed away.

Working mainly in gold, silver, and bronze, Jefferson created pieces in a personalized technique that drew upon methods of sculpting. He used abstract, biomorphic, organic, and geometric shapes found in nature to create dynamic compositions. His oeuvre does not draw directly from an African cultural tradition, but it calls attention to natural materials from the earth like gemstones and metals used as a means of adorning or presenting oneself.

Jefferson's work challenges the hegemonic perceptions of Black American aesthetics in jewelry, which has often been perceived as mainly being beadwork or as having overt references to specific cultures in historical Africa. Instead, Jefferson created objects that reference African aesthetics through the use of biomorphism—while also penetrating the realm of contemporary jewelry via his utilizing a combination of techniques in fine jewelry, industrial metalwork, and sculpture. His works include playful movement, experimental textures, and unique settings with gemstones—all of which could be read as having a multitude of influences.

His 1968 work *Pendant* illustrates his manipulation of metal to create intricate textures—topped by a vertical gemstone setting that seems to defy gravity.

I am in the process of writing my dissertation on jewelry objects by Black Diaspora jewelry makers. I have completed conservation work exploring the materials and processes Jefferson used in making this piece. Taken further, I want to explore—and initiate open discussion around—the specific ways Black jewelry artists craft their creations, as well as to expand the very limited analysis that has been previously done to scientifically characterize the materials used and the techniques found in objects made by Black jewelry artists.

For this study, by utilizing scientific methodologies such as Raman spectroscopy, X-ray fluorescence (XRF), and stereo-microscopy, I was able to ascertain the optical properties and elemental compositions of the materials used in the piece. In so doing I am able to exemplify which methodologies are crucial in the study of metals and jewelry of the Black Diaspora. I set out to show how, through a set of methodologies amalgamated from different disciplines—visual analysis from art history; scientific instrumentation from conservation/cultural heritage sciences; optical analysis from gemology; and archival studies from material culture, appreciators, creators, and scholars of jewelry—I am able to gain a better understanding of the materiality of objects and their processes of creation. These methodologies glean insights into how an object can be reverse engineered and how the materials can be characterized for identification—and even traced to their geographic origins.

Several questions about Bob Jefferson's work remain front and center for me. First, how did he create his works?[1] While it is clear that Jefferson used traditional jeweler's hand tools, there are questions about if his connection to industrial metalwork and sculpture influenced his jewelry-making. To begin this investigation, I set out to determine precisely how, and with what metals and minerals, Jefferson created his *Pendant*.

Figure 1. Photomicrograph of a forged region of Bob Jefferson's *Pendant*. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

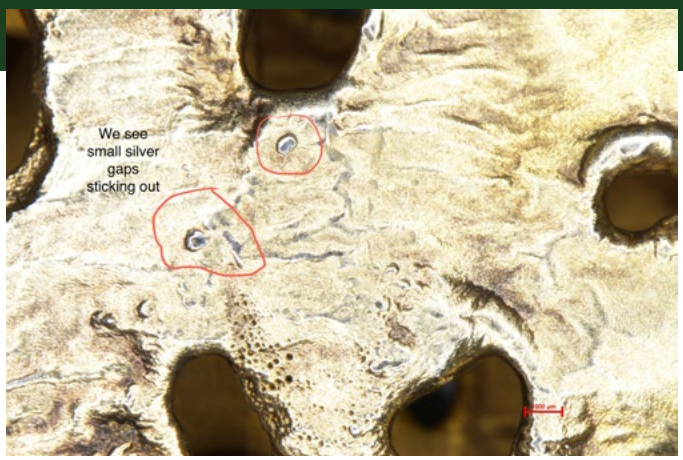


Figure 2. Photomicrograph of a cast region of Bob Jefferson's *Pendant*. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

Bob Jefferson
Pendant, 1968
Fabricated, forged silver, bronze, [semi-precious] stone
9 x 2 x ¾ in.
Courtesy of the Museum of Arts and Design, New York: gift of the Johnson Wax Company through the American Craft Council, 1977.2.39
Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

How Did Jefferson Make His *Pendant*?

I used nondestructive, qualitative XRF spectroscopy to determine the elemental composition of specific areas of the metal components; I did this by simultaneously acquiring spectra for all elements detectable with the instrument, which indicated amounts of copper, gold, and silver throughout the piece. I focused on two parts of the *Pendant:* the central base, which on account of its porous texture appears to have been cast; and along the bars that create the edge of the work, which appear to be forged (as illustrated through the dimensionality of shape and continuous smooth layer). Through the XRF I was able to determine that both the cast element and the forged element are alloys that contain copper. The fact that there is zinc present in the forged bar components (fig. 1) suggests that the material is most likely a form of brass. The cast centerpiece (fig. 2) is most likely bronze—determined by the detection of both tin and copper. Once formed into their respective shapes, the many components of this piece were plated with a consistent layer of gold and silver alloys that unified their color somewhat.

The XRF results of the areas with visible use of solder (fig. 3) reveal that the solder was made from lead, most likely alloyed with silver. Furthermore, the solder-apparent area where the two components connect is the only part of the piece with significant amounts of lead, which could indicate that the joining of the components occurred after the pieces were already created. Additionally, Jefferson's use of lead-based solder was most likely influenced by two factors in his life, the first being his background training in sculpture (and industrial metalworking processes) and the second being the lower cost of lead-based solder.

To further explore the manufacturing process of *Pendant* I implemented stereomicroscopy. The surface topographies between the forged areas and cast elements have completely different textures and evenness. The hole-filled surface of the almost bell-shaped centerpiece indicates it was created through a casting process. The cast areas have porous spillage spots (fig. 4) where the poured metal did not fill the gaps—whereas there are no bubbles or gaps in the forged areas aside from filing and forged manipulation.

The microscopy also revealed tarnishing, which is most prolific in the sections where

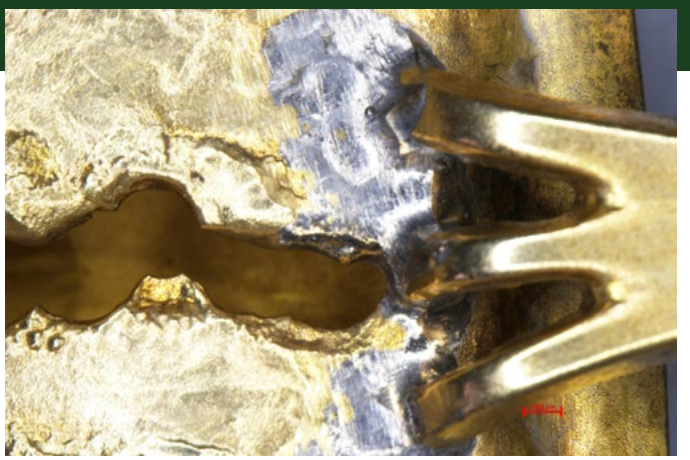


Figure 3. Photomicrograph of Bob Jefferson's *Pendant*, specifically the region with larger amounts of solder. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

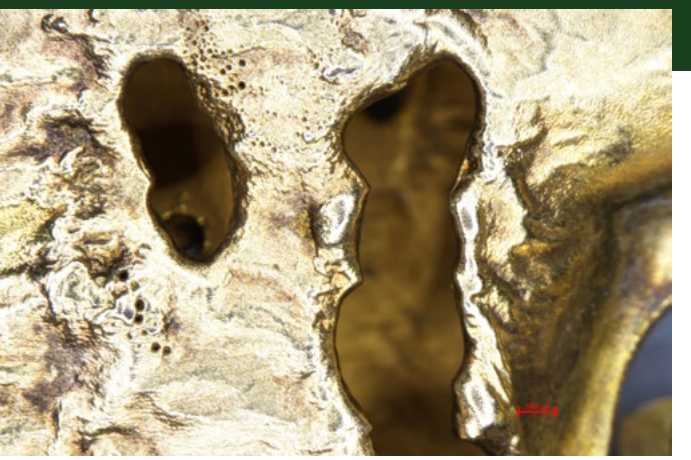


Figure 4. Photomicrograph of spillage spot on Bob Jefferson's *Pendant* from casting process. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

the holes and pores create the texture on the central component (fig. 5). Microscopy also revealed areas where either the gilding or plating is beginning to fade—or perhaps never did completely cover the area (fig. 6). The tarnish appears to be a greenish color, perhaps indicating that at some point the object was kept in a very moist environment. (Over time, as a gilded layer fades, moisture will continue to penetrate the metal substrate underneath, which will continue to corrode and tarnish the work—affecting the surface appearance.)

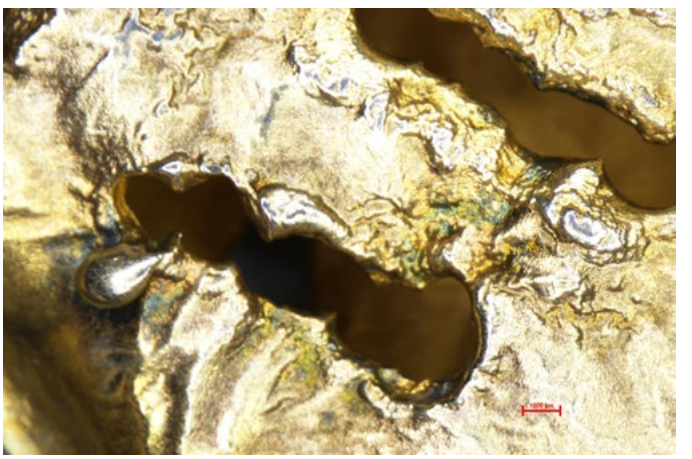


Figure 5. Photomicrograph showing an example of the hole-like texture of Bob Jefferson's *Pendant* under magnification, displaying products of tarnishing. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

The Beautiful and Curious Green Gemstone

Upon inspecting the pendant's gemstone with a jeweler's loupe I instantly assumed it is a form of treated jade. "Jade" is a broad term used to describe two different minerals that are composed of various silicate materials: nephrite and jadeite. In nephrite, microscopic crystals are made of either tremolite or actinolite and appear long and fibrous, while jadeite crystals are platy and prismatic. Both minerals measure only 5½ on the Mohs hardness scale—and yet, the compact interwoven structure of these crystals strengthens the aggregates, raising both varieties' hardnesses to between 6½ and 7. This complicated network of crystals is what makes jade an ideal material to be carved and polished for crafts and decorative arts like jewelry.

I also applied the chemical analysis technique of Raman spectroscopy to the pendant's gemstone. Since the light-scattering technique produces a wavelength spectrum of the object in question, it's possible to compare the results—a sort of distinct fingerprint—with those of a vast database of different materials. As such, in gemology and mineralogy

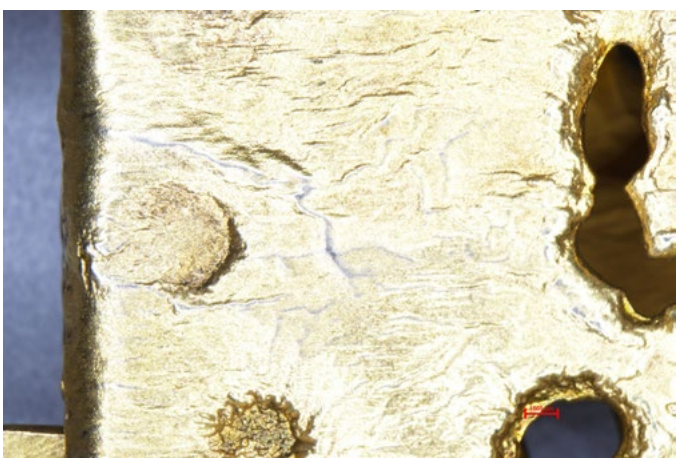


Figure 6. Photomicrograph of where silver shows on Bob Jefferson's *Pendant*. *Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.*

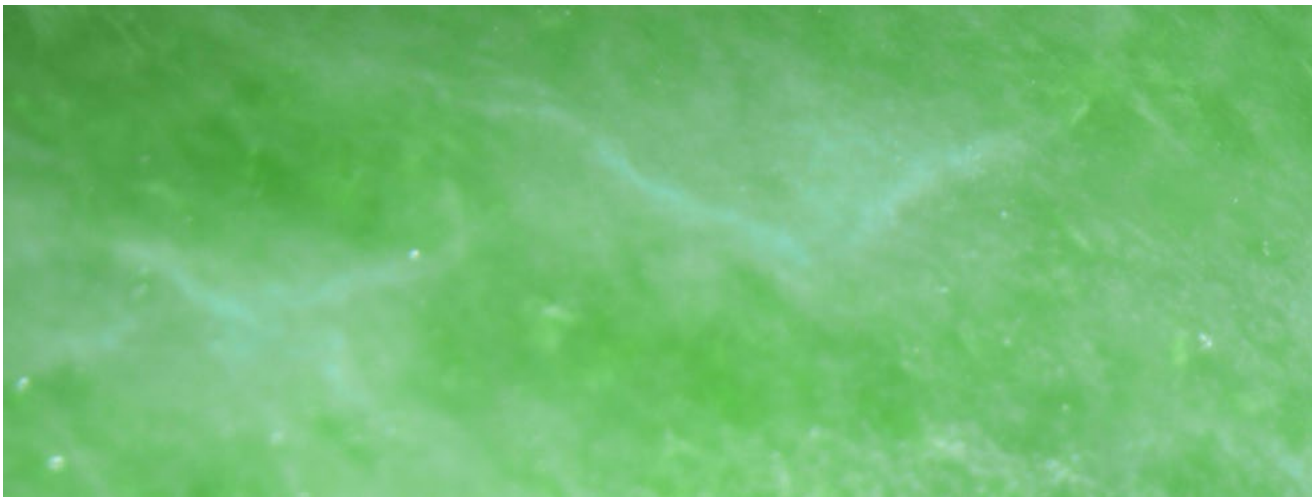


Figure 7. Photomicrograph of blue-green gemstone.
Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.

Figure 8. Photomicrograph showing the gemstone's vitreous texture.
Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.

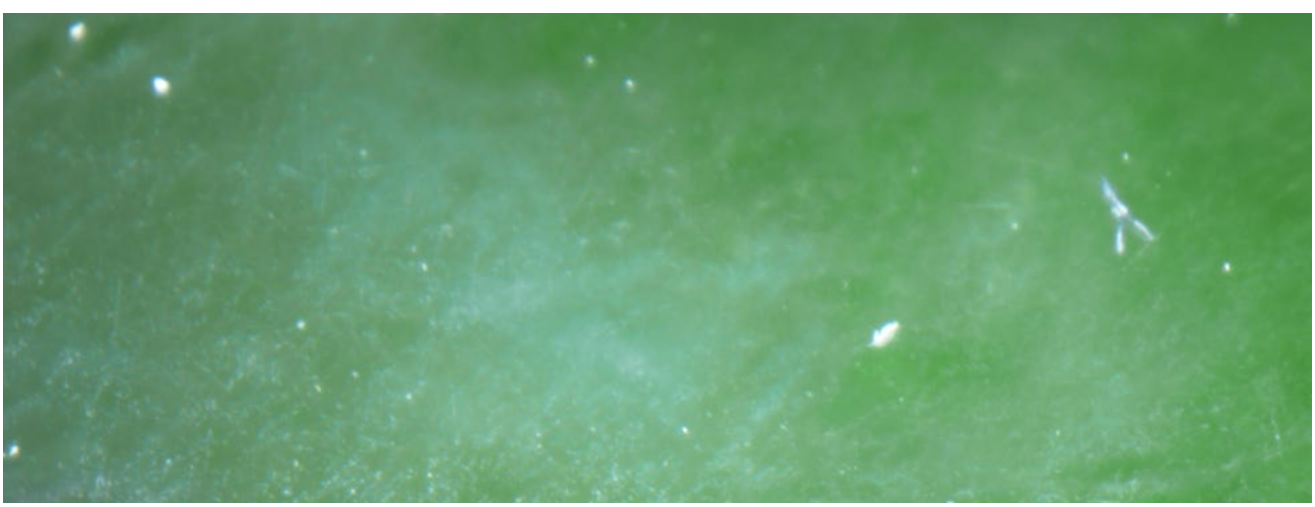


Figure 9. Photomicrograph of gemstone's chatoyancy.
Image acquired by author in 2022 with stereomicroscopy.

This level of analysis and conservation is long overdue—and there is much more work to be done.

Raman is a useful tool for differentiating natural gem materials from synthetic or treated materials.

The gemstone in Jefferson's piece appears to have a very similar Raman spectrum to two minerals: several examples of nephrite aggregated from actinolite, and one sample of blue-green jadeite. This makes sense, since jade and, more specifically, variants of nephrite were commercialized and sold in the western United States throughout the twentieth century. This suggests that Jefferson, who was living in the San Francisco Bay Area at the time, acquired gemstones from local suppliers; add to which, there is a Californian variant of nephrite that ranges from deep green to blue-green. Additionally, the gem's vitreous surface luster (fig. 7) is consistent with actinolite nephrite (and not the tremolite variant). Another optical element revealed by the microscopy (fig. 8) is a subtle chatoyancy or cat-eye-like light reflection, which is distinct among both nephrite varieties.

However, some of the peaks of the gemstone's Raman wavelengths don't perfectly align with those for actinolite nephrite. This suggests that the gemstone could have been treated (through methods such as heating) to deepen and intensify its green color; such was a common practice used throughout the twentieth century, since intensifying a gemstone's color was thought to increase its value.

I consider it highly likely that the pendant's gemstone was heated. Furthermore, my close inspection through the microscope revealed that some blue-green inclusions did not completely change during the heating process (fig. 9). I conclude that the natural, untreated color of the gemstone was a lighter shade of blue-green.

Labor of Love

Altogether, my findings indicate that for his *Pendant* Jefferson cast the center component with a bronze alloy, forged a brass element, and completed it by setting a treated piece of locally available jade. The solder used on the piece was most likely added later; the points where the solder shows might be areas where he made repairs to stabilize the piece.

But this deeper understanding of the "how" and "with what" of Jefferson's *Pendant* is only the beginning. I will be researching additional works of historical Black jewelry to understand and characterize the materials and processes used to create them. This research will expand what is known about particular Black artists, their material choices, their fabrication methods, and the technologies accessible to them in lovingly contributing to what is ultimately a jewelry-based cultural heritage. This level of analysis and conservation is long overdue—and there is much more work to be done.

1 At this time, fewer than ten pieces by Jefferson have been identified—most mentioned in books or exhibition catalogs. The *Pendant,* in the collection of the Museum of Arts and Design, is the only known work in a museum.

Bob Jefferson
Pendant, 1968
Fabricated, forged silver, bronze, [semi-precious] stone
9 x 2 x ¾ in.
Courtesy of the Museum of Arts and Design, New York: gift of the Johnson Wax Company through the American Craft Council, 1977.2.39
Photo: John Bigelow Taylor

HYBRID OBJECT: EXPLORING CHATGPT

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS HERE TO STAY, and as artists and makers, we can confront this new reality by doing what we're good at: experimental play.

In a virtual "interview" with ChatGPT-4, the editorial team at *Metalsmith* lobbed a wide range of questions at the AI program to see how our readers might benefit from using this tool. In most cases, the text answers ChatGPT-4 quickly served up were perfunctory and surface-level—good enough to serve as a springboard for tasks such as explaining a simple jewelry-making technique, composing an artist statement, or coming up with a joke.

However, in each of these cases, the content required more work. The sweat soldering guide skipped over essential steps; the artist statement hit all the buzzwords but didn't saying anything insightful; and the punchline of the joke fell flat and had to be re-written by a human.

More importantly, ChatGPT-4 can be limited and "influenced" by the texts it can access on the internet. To make sure that the AI program draws from reputable sources only, you can ask it to cite sources, but users report inaccurate or made-up citations.[1]

Like CAD or 3D printing, ChatGPT-4 can be a tool in our repertoire, but it's not a one-stop shop. What follows is a small selection of what we considered to be the most successful results.

DALL-E, prompted by editorial team
3D rendering of an oversized cocktail ring made from hundreds of rococo cat whiskers (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

A TOOL FOR AN ARTIST'S PERSONAL PRACTICE?

Write a one-paragraph artist statement for an art jeweler whose AI-generated work does not exist in the material world but nonetheless engages with jewelry's historical relationship to wealth, class, power, and coloniality.

As an art jeweler, my work exists at the intersection of technology, history, and materiality. Using AI-generated techniques, my pieces challenge traditional notions of jewelry as objects of wealth and status, instead exploring the potential for jewelry to exist beyond the physical realm. While my work does not exist in the material world, it engages deeply with the historical relationship between jewelry, power, and coloniality, interrogating the ways in which jewelry has been used as a tool of oppression and exclusion throughout history. Through my pieces, I seek to reimagine jewelry as a tool for resistance and liberation, inviting viewers to consider the possibilities of a more equitable and just future.

Write a 100-word conceptual artist statement for an oversized cocktail ring made from hundreds of rococo cat whiskers (AI-generated image in DALL-E).

My artistic practice intertwines the realms of nature, history, and adornment, inviting contemplation and reimagining conventional notions of beauty. In my latest creation, an oversized cocktail ring crafted meticulously from hundreds of rococo cat whiskers, I explore the delicate and ephemeral nature of feline grace. Each whisker, delicately collected over time, serves as a testament to the passage of life, embodying the untamed elegance of our feline companions. Through this juxtaposition of the ethereal and the opulent, I invite viewers to reflect on the intricate connections between humanity, nature, and the transience of existence, elevating the mundane into the extraordinary.

A TOOL TO ANSWER EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CRAFT?

Pretend you are an art professor. Write one paragraph to answer this question: If Craft and Design had a baby, what would it be?

If craft and design had a baby, it would be an object that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing, but with an added emphasis on the design process. This object would be crafted with a high level of skill and attention to detail, but would also prioritize the user experience and the design elements that make it visually appealing. It would be a fusion of form and function, with a focus on innovation and problem-solving. The result would be an object that is not only beautiful but also serves a specific purpose, enhancing the daily lives of those who use it. This offspring of craft and design would demonstrate the power of collaboration and the potential for creativity and functionality to coexist in harmony, creating a truly unique and valuable product.

Pretend you are an art professor of few words. Write one paragraph to answer this question: If Craft and Design had a baby, what would it be?

Hybrid object.

A TOOL FOR WRITING BAD JOKES FOR YOUR UPCOMING PUBLIC SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT?

Write a joke in one paragraph. Include a silversmith, a blacksmith, and jeweler walking into a bar.

[edited to combine two answers to same question]

A silversmith, a blacksmith, and a jeweler walked into a bar. The bartender looked up and said, “Is this some kind of artisanal joke?” The silversmith replied, “No, we just needed to get hammered.” The blacksmith added, “And we wanted to iron out our differences.” The jeweler chimed in, “And maybe we’ll find some gems of wisdom.” The bartender rolled his eyes and said, “Well, I guess I’ll just have to steel myself for the puns.”

A TOOL TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD? (or to not take oneself too seriously)

Write a joke that personifies and includes Art, Design, and Craft.

[edited because of unfunny last line]

Art, Design, and Craft were all stranded on a deserted island. Art said, “I’ll create beautiful sculptures out of the sand to keep us entertained.” Design said, “I’ll use my skills to create a shelter that’s both functional and stylish.” Craft said, “I’ll build us a boat to get us off this island.” Art and Design were impressed, but asked, “How are you going to build a boat out of just sand and palm trees?” Craft replied, “Blood, sweat, and tears.”

1 Hannah Rozzear and Sarah Park, “ChatGPT and Fake Citations,” *Duke University Libraries* (blog), March 9, 2023, https://blogs.library.duke.edu/blog/2023/03/09/chatgpt-and-fake-citations.

Above:
DALL-E, prompted by editorial team
A statement necklace made with plastic bananas dotted with flies made of emeralds and rubies (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

Left:
DALL-E, prompted by editorial team
A fleshy necklace inspired by the uterus (prompt), 2023
Digital rendering

< DESIGNED BY WOMEN

Taisha Carrington
Bun Halo (hair ornament), 2018
Hair, brass, citrines, honey quartz, champagne citrines, peridot, pearls, silk
22.5 x 22.5 cm
Credit: The Stewart Program for Modern Design, gift of Michael Sze, by exchange, 2022.6
Photo courtesy of Taisha Carrington

Announcements

CraftForms call for entries

Deadline: 9.13.2023

Wayne Art Center is seeking submissions for *CraftForms 2023*, the 28th International Juried Exhibition of Contemporary Fine Craft, in the following mediums: basketry, ceramics, decorative fiber, furniture, glass, jewelry, metal, mixed media, paper, wearable art, and wood. Selected works will be on display in the Davenport Gallery of Wayne Art Center in Wayne, Pennsylvania, from December 1, 2023, through January 20, 2024. This year's juror, Jean McLaughlin, will present $10,000 in prize awards.
craftforms.org
@wayne_art_center

Designed by Women website launch

The world of industrial design has always been the purview of men, and the world of objects for the home has seemingly been divided into male creators and female consumers. With the Designed by Women project, leading voices in the design community challenge our assumptions about design. Developed by The Stewart Program for Modern Design in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), this platform explores the work of women across the globe, from 1900 to the present.
designedbywomen.org
@designed_by_women

Conferences & Events

CONTEMPORANIA

9.28.2023 – 9.30.2023
Palau de Pedralbes, Barcelona, Spain

CONTEMPORANIA High Craftsmanship Barcelona (previously known as JOYA Barcelona Art Jewellery and Objects) is a new fair that promotes high craftsmanship. It is a novel space for national and international contemporary crafts and a trade fair for artists, institutions, galleries, and collectives to present and promote their creativity. The innovation and artistic vision in contemporary craftsmanship will be presented through different types of applied arts such as ceramics, art jewelry, lacquer, metal, textiles, glass, paper, and wood.
contemporania.cat
@contemporaniabarcelona

> CONTEMPORANIA

Ricardo Tena
SIMOOM, 2020
Metal
75 x 83 x 73 cm
Photo: Buttazzoni

Involution: Making Jewellery, Creating Change

10.4.2024 – 10.6.2024
Perth, Australia

The 19th Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australian National Biennial Conference will take place in fall of 2024. The theme, "Involution: Making Jewellery, Creating Change," captures the entangled pushing and pulling of organisms constantly inventing new ways to live with and alongside one another. The conference will bring together everyone from practitioners, educators, and students to curators and collectors, critics, and cultural theorists for two days of discussion, debate, interaction, and exchange in the Cultural Centre of Perth, Western Australia. There will be workshops, exhibitions, and artist talks running either side of the event, in the city and surrounds.
jmgawa.com.au/events/involution-making-jewellery-creating-change-19th-jmga-national-conference
@jmga_wa

< INVOLUTION

Robin Wells
Everything is dual, 2021
Sterling silver, fine silver, 24k gold
90 x 5 cm
Photo by the artist

Exhibitions

^ OPEN CLOSE FRONT BACK

Yukihiro Shibata
Sea Life, ca. 1985
14k-gold-plated silver
¾ x 6½ in.
Racine Art Museum,
Gift of Karen Johnson Boyd

Self
4.14.2023 – 8.19.2023
Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA

Self explores concepts related to cross-cultural expectations of gender, and what type of interactions will hence follow in our lives, from the most mundane elements of self to the defining moments that make up our lives. The exhibition will specifically highlight the work of artists matt lambert and Erika Diamond, who explore the breadth and confines of gender identity, connection, contact, and the body through wearable works of art.
contemporarycraft.org/exhibition/bridge-14-self/exhibition-overview/
@SCCpgh

Installation shot of the *Self* exhibition at Contemporary Craft. Work by matt lambert made from fencing helmets, salvaged upholstery fringe, and cotton.

Photo by Reagan West-Whitman

Open Close Front Back: Exploring Contemporary Art Jewelry Design
3.1.2023 – 9.23.2023
Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI

Unless faced with something particularly unusual or difficult to maneuver, many people likely put on or take off a piece of jewelry without thinking about the mechanics of its design. Contemporary art jewelers—those constructing jewelry by hand as they undertake conceptual explorations—necessarily consider composition, materials, closures, and the relationship between the object and the wearer. This exhibition, drawn entirely from RAM's growing collection, celebrates contemporary jewelry while emphasizing the consideration of it from new angles—sometimes literally.
ramart.org/exhibit/open-close-front-back
@racineartmuseum

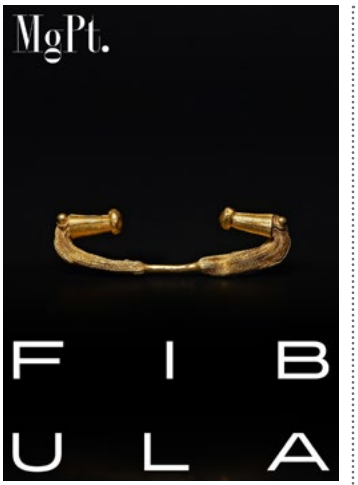
Media

Chunghi Choo and Her Students: Contemporary Art and New Forms in Metal
Book

This first in-depth publication on Chunghi Choo (b. 1938, Incheon, Korea), renowned Korean American metalsmith, offers a comprehensive look at her remarkable life through texts by American craft experts and a rich selection of Choo's artwork, which spans six decades. It also features artwork by thirty-two of her former students, many of whom have become eminent artists in the fields of jewelry, tableware, sculpture, and design.
arnoldsche.com/us/product/chunghi-choo-and-her-students
@arnoldsche_art_publishers

Melting Pot
Digital Magazine

Melting Pot is the online magazine and editorial arm of the Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim, a cultural landmark showcasing treasures dating as far back as the third millennium BC through to contemporary art jewelry. *Melting Pot* serves as an anchor for all of the museum's activities and is geared toward collectors, designers, artists, and publishers.
mgpt-magazine.com
@mgptmagazine



Melting Pot magazine article about a Celtiberian fibula with horseheads.

Photo courtesy of *Melting Pot*

Therese Hilbert RED: Jewelry 1966–2020
Book

This new book on Swiss-born, Munich based jeweler Therese Hilbert is the first comprehensive publication celebrating the artist's expansive career. It is an accompaniment to a retrospective of her work at Die Neue Sammlung—The Design Museum, Pinakothek der Moderne, on view from March 12 – July 30, 2023. The book includes essays by Heike Endter, Otto Künzli, Ellen Maurer-Zilioli, Pravu Mazumdar, Angelika Nollert, Warwick Freeman and Petra Hölscher.
arnoldsche.com/us/product/therese-hilbert-red
@arnoldsche_art_publishers

Women of Jewelry: A Global Representation of 100 Women's Stories
Book

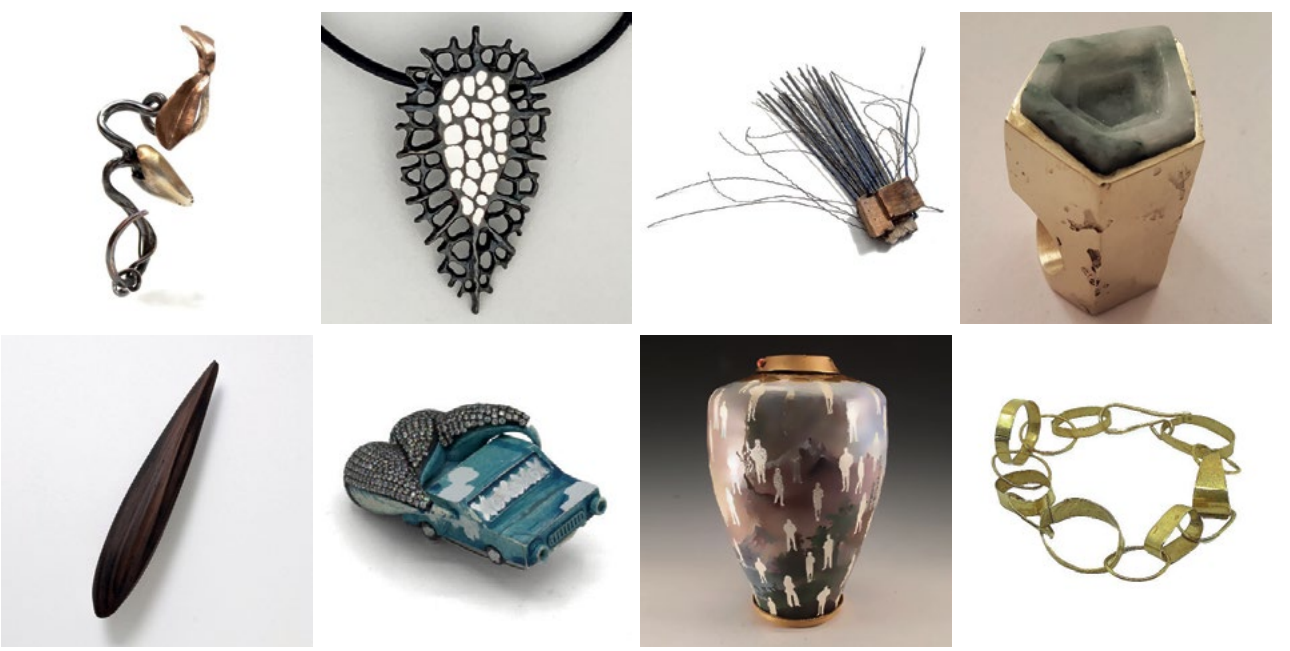
This book is a limited edition collection of compelling interviews, portraits, and jewelry images from 100 women in the jewelry industry. Every woman's story and insights are informative, educational, and inspiring. A portion of each sale will go toward funding scholarships offered by Women's Jewelry Association, the Fashion Institute of Technology, and the Gemological Institute of America. Written by Linda Kozloff-Turner, edited by Frank Stankus, and designed by Peggy Sands.
100womenofjewelry.com/products/women-of-jewelry
@womenofjewelry

< WOMEN OF JEWELRY

Loren Nicole
The Longship, 2020
22k yellow gold, rock crystal, silk
7 x 3 x 5 in.
Photo courtesy of Loren Nicole

OPEN CALL

WE ARE SNAG: Anthology Ed 3



Row 1, L to R / Kattie Jones, Paula McDowell, René Lee Henry, Gabriela Bermeo
Row 2, L to R / Jo Bennett, Zach Mellman-Carsey, Harlan W. Butt, Sue Muir

Call open through August 15, 2023
Catalog on view beginning September 15, 2023

A searchable virtual catalog of SNAG membership, created as a visual resource for fellow members, educators, retail shoppers, collectors, galleries, and museums.

www.***snagmetalsmith.org***/we-are-snag-anthology-ed3/

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I can see clearly now, the strain is gone.
Magnifying eyeglasses and light customized with your Rx
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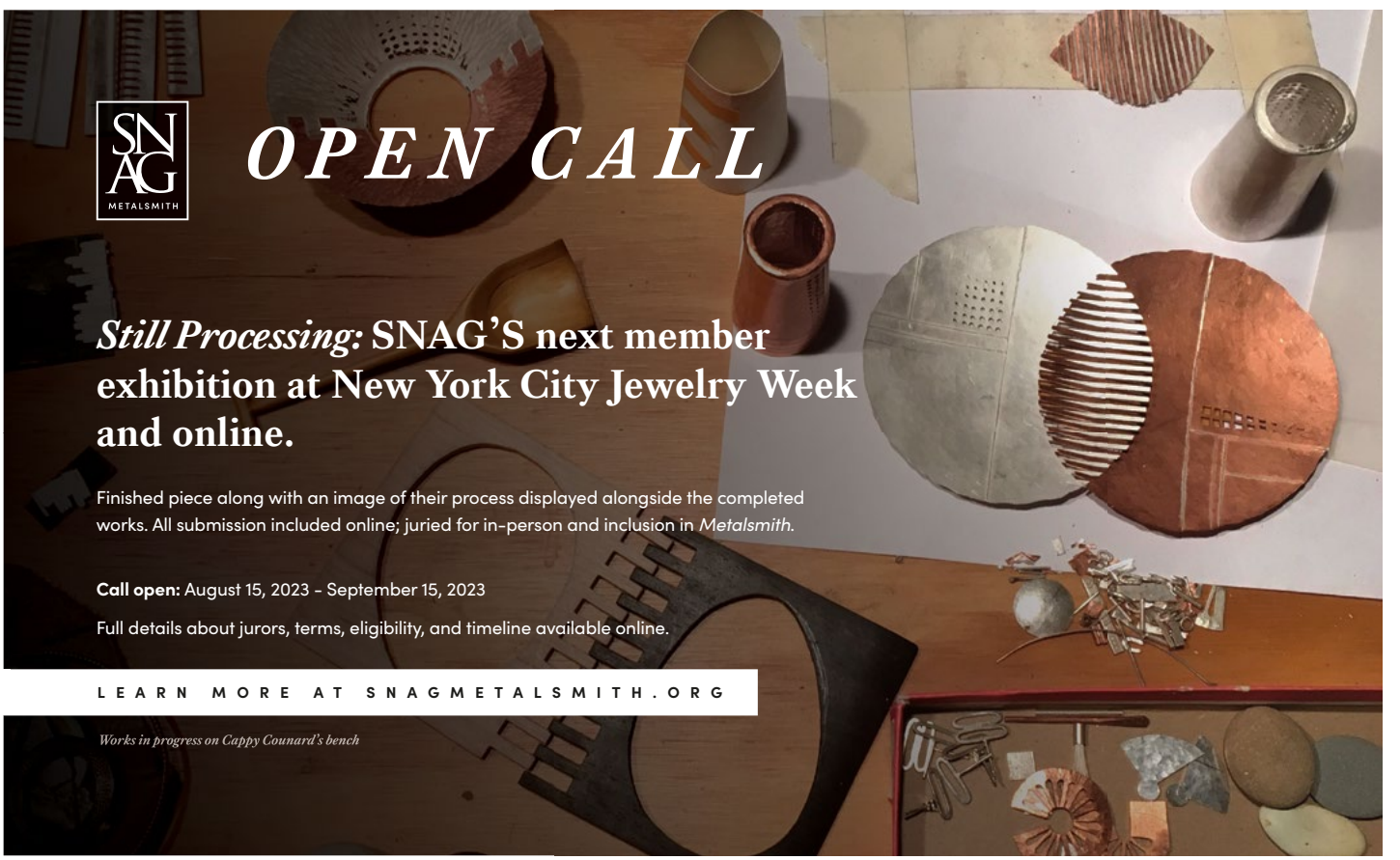
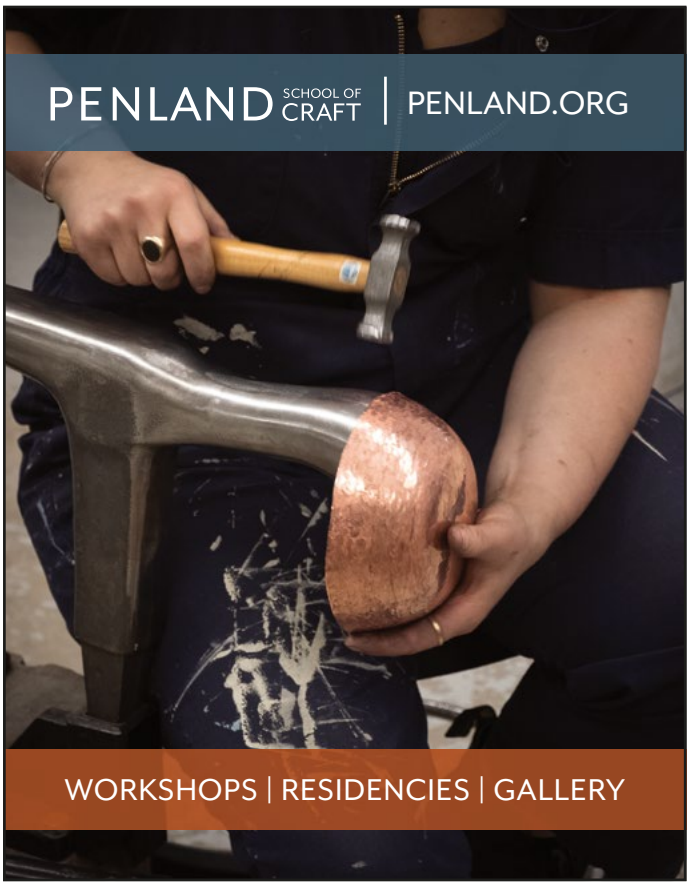

SNAG METALSMITH
OPEN CALL
Still Processing: SNAG'S next member exhibition at New York City Jewelry Week and online.
Finished piece along with an image of their process displayed alongside the completed works. All submission included online; juried for in-person and inclusion in Metalsmith.
Call open: August 15, 2023 - September 15, 2023
Full details about jurors, terms, eligibility, and timeline available online.
LEARN MORE AT SNAGMETALSMITH.ORG
Works in progress on Cappy Counard's bench



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pictured: Jim Bové in the Metals & Jewelry Studio

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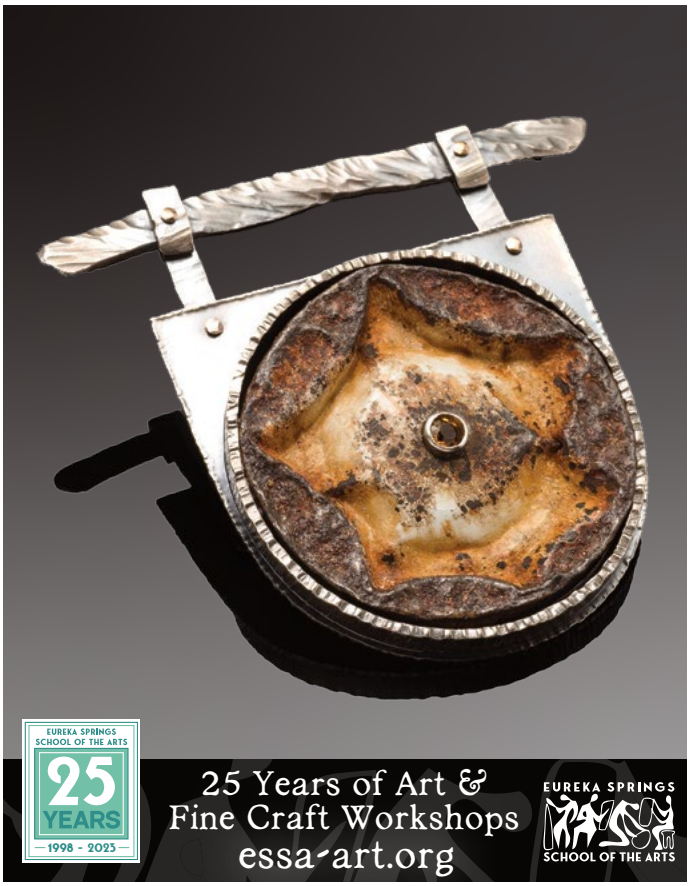

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